THE GAME FOWL

PROUD

THE COCKER

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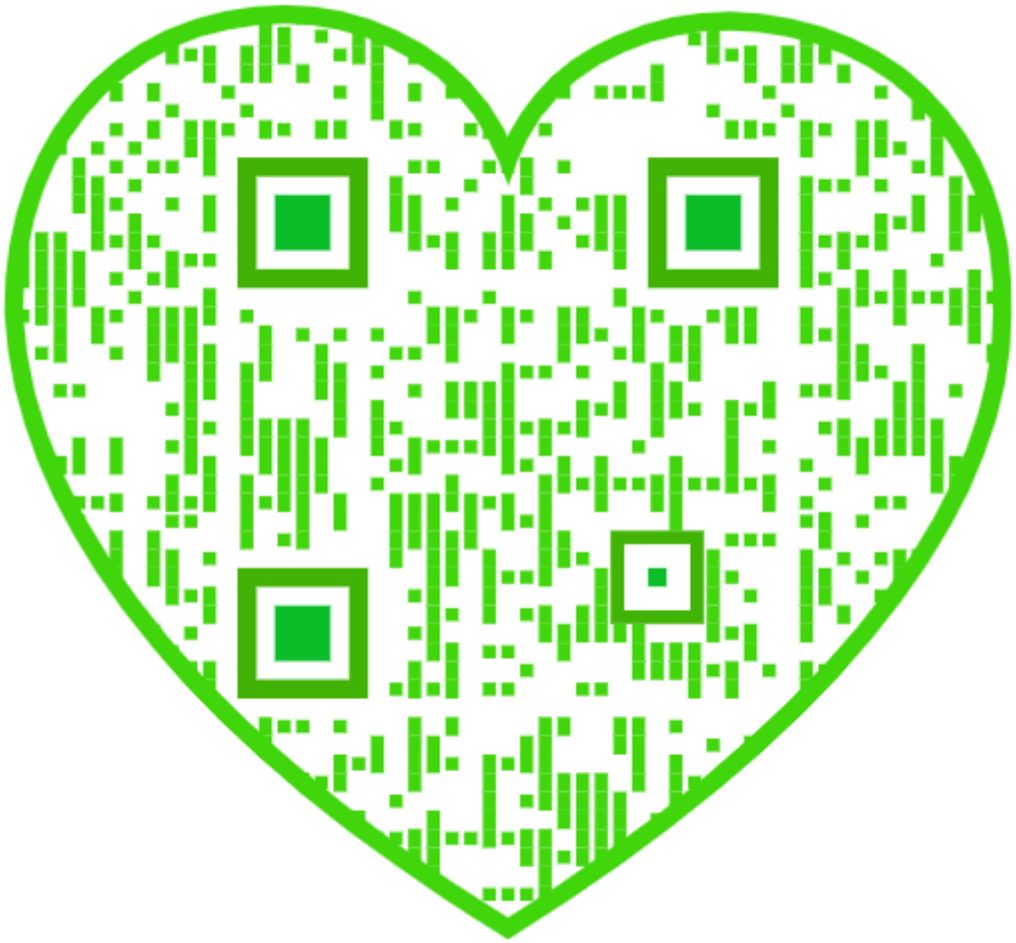

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The Game Fowl

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THE GAME FOWL

(OLD ENGLISH AND MODERN)

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(OLD ENGLISH AND MODERN)

BY

P. PROUD

AUTHOR OF "BANTAMS AS A HOBBY," ETC.

TO WHICH IS ADDED A REPRINT OF

THE COCKER

BY W. SKETCHLEY, GENT.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1814

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PREFACE.

THE requests which have reached me for the publication in a more permanent form of the articles contributed by Mr. Proud to *The Feathered World* have prompted this reprint of papers which have thus evidently been proved useful. The chapters have been carefully revised, and, with the addition of Illustrations and two Coloured Plates, they should certainly be of real service to the novice, and, perchance, convey a hint or two to even older fanciers.

The inclusion within the same cover of an exact reprint of that old and standard work on Game Fowl, *The Cocker*, was not arrived at without serious consideration. To bowdlerise the book by cutting out all that pertained to a sport which the laws of a more humane age forbid, would have been to rob the work of much of its quaintness, and of a good deal of information. Not, therefore, as an incentive to cock-fighting, but as an aid to the breeding of healthy, vigorous stock have I reprinted the pages of that worthy old fancier, William Sketchley, Gent., as he is so pleasantly described

on his 1814 title-page. As a history of practices prevailing a century since, *The Cocker*, with its curious frontispiece of an old-time cock-fight, may well contrast with Mr. Proud's story of its modern successor, and the illustration of a game contest at Birmingham in 1902.

THE EDITOR,

The Feathered World.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

OLD ENGLISH GAME.

	PAGE
Black-Reds	3
Spangles	6
Duckwings	7
Blue-Reds	8
Piles	11
Brown-Reds	12
Blacks and Whites	13
Brassy Wings	13
Birchens	13
Muffs and Hennies	13
Standard of Perfection	14
Breeding and Management	18
Perches	21
Feeding	21
Dubbing	22
Preparing for Exhibition	25

PART II.

MODERN GAME.

Chief Characteristics	28
Black-Reds	31
Brown-Reds	34
Piles	37
Duckwings	43
Birchens	46
Whites and Blacks	46
Standard of Perfection	48
Hatching and Rearing	53
Feeding	55
Diseases	56

PART III.

"THE COCKER."

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

Coloured Plate—Old English Game, "The Ideal" . *Frontispiece*

" " " " " Black-Reds, etc. . *face* 26

Black-Red Old English Game Cockerel 9

Spangle " " " Hen 17

Black-Red Cock " " 19

White Cock and Black Henny Cockerel, Old English Game . 23

Brown-Red Pullet Modern Game 41

Pile Game 47

Varieties of Modern Game . . . . . *face* 48

A Game Contest in Modern Times 61

A Game Contest in Olden Times 64

PART I.

OLD ENGLISH GAME.

WHEN, where, and how the Old English Game fowl originated is now probably beyond the power of any man accurately to decide. Some would have us believe that it is a descendant of the Jungle Fowl of India or Ceylon, but we have really no definite information on the point of its ancestry.

The ancient classical writers speak of fighting fowl in their day. It is probable that, for centuries, pugilistic birds entertained their owners with the display of their talents, and that gradually the birds were bred towards that size, strength and agility which best suited their work.

What is now called Old English Game was certainly never the development of a single lifetime. We incline to the opinion expressed above, that the breed was gradually worked age after age into the points found half a century ago, and the type altered generation after generation, advancing towards what was considered the ideal of perfection for fighting purposes. In this book it is not my intention to treat upon the pugilistic qualities of this noble breed, but to give my readers some practical and helpful knowledge of the Old English Game fowl as an exhibition bird; and at the same time try and establish an up-to-date standard of points required in the exhibition Old English Game fowl of the twentieth century.

That the breed has existed pretty much as we see it now for a very long time goes without saying, and we predict that, so long as fowls obtain any hold upon the fancier, Old English Game will have a strong position in the lists. It may not be that classes at shows will always be maintained, but, apart from pugilistic tendencies, when these latter are added in the appeal to the British fancier's taste, the breed is certain to find a *locus standi* in some hearts, and to be bred as it has been bred so long for the love of the thing, rather than for any honour and glory in the prize lists. At the present time, the Old English fowl is, however, bidding fair

to drive the Modern Game into less room at our shows, and possibly almost to annihilate it. A perusal of the entries of any show of to-day (with the exception, perhaps, of Birmingham, the yearly rendezvous of Modern Game fanciers) cannot for one moment leave this matter in doubt. Seldom have secretaries of shows any reason to cancel the Old English classes; whereas it is a matter of common knowledge that at many shows the Modern Game classes have to be either cut down or cancelled to save a substantial loss to the societies. At some shows during the past season the Old English Game classes have been the flower of the exhibition, entries beyond precedent, and the quality superb. And it is not owing to the fickleness of fanciers that the Old English has so monopolised things. It is true that in the foremost ranks of its breeders to-day stand some of the most prominent Modern Game breeders, who only a year or two ago scoffed at the "mongrel" fowl making its appearance in the show pen, but these have been won in part over to the Old English fowl through sheer necessity. The Modern English Game has been so inbred for colour, and to secure fine round bone, that it can hardly be advanced further, and at the present time is in some danger of falling into neglect, through the great difficulty of rearing the very delicate chicks. In these busy times men have neither time nor money to throw away upon fowls whose chicks require so much capital, care and labour, and whose progeny after all may break down and leave the breeder *minus* a season's fruits. The Old English Game fowl has not been thus inbred for colour or fine bone. The colour is a secondary consideration only, and bone is in request. The breed therefore admits of frequent crossings of strains, and in consequence gives fuller results, which again give greater satisfaction.

The varieties of Old English Game are legion, and can easily be run up to a score or more, as, for instance, black-reds, ginger-reds, spangles, duckwings, brassywings, blue-reds, blues, piles, duns, greys, Furnesses, brown-reds, birchens, creels, cuckoos, greys, whites, blacks, muffs and several others.

Four of these, however, are more commonly met with than others, and so will be more fully dealt with here than the others. They are black-reds, spangles, duckwings and blue-reds.

Black-Reds.

The Old English black-red is identical in colour with the Modern black-red. The face, head, comb, wattles and ears should be a bright, healthy cherry-red, with no touch of white in the latter. The head must be powerful, fairly short, beak strong and slightly curved, eyes rich ruby-red, a yellow, white or pearl eye being a disqualification, although at some of our big shows birds possessing white and yellow eyes have been placed in the prize-list by so-called specialist judges; but this is decidedly wrong, as a light eye denotes weakness of sight, and, apart from this, nothing looks better than a rich, ruby-red eye in a Game fowl. A bird with a bad eye should under no circumstances be bred from, however good he may be in other respects.

The neck hackle should be as bright an orange as possible; back, wing bow, and saddle, rich bright crimson, with saddle hackle light orange to match the neck; wing bars and wing butts, steel blue-black; secondaries, a rich chestnut to end of feather; breast and thighs, black; tail, green-black, although some strains have more or less white in tail, which is allowable in Old English, and only counts against the bird when it comes to a deciding point, and then only to a very small extent.

We now come to the leg colour, which to-day gives rise to dispute as to what is the correct leg colour of each variety. In black-reds I should certainly favour white legs, also in spangles and blues. Although I should certainly not discard a good bird of the two former varieties with yellow legs, still if there were two birds of almost equal merits in the class, and the one had white legs and the other yellow, I should give my vote to the former, and I think that such a course would find favour with the majority of Old English breeders. The shin-bone should be as round and smooth as possible, not flat in front, as sometimes seen, and which denotes weakness of limb. Flat shins are a serious defect, and should count against the bird in the show pen. Toes should be long, firm and straight, the back toe placed directly opposite front middle toe, the point resting firmly on the ground, with no tendency to come to the side, which is termed duck-footed, and as such is liable to be disqualified. A Game fowl with deformed feet is useless, either as an exhibition bird or for stock. The bird should be low on leg, powerful in thigh, broad and deep in chest, not like those narrow hollow-chested specimens that do duty in the show

pen at some of our shows, and which are simply a bundle of feathers with a beautiful colour, as unlike a Game fowl as it is possible to imagine. Not only broad in shoulder, but broad and short in back, limbs set on firmly and well apart, giving the bird a good footing to enable him to hold his own against any foe. The wings should be short and well rounded, not flat-sided, which is very objectionable, tail full and fairly long, with drooping sickles and side hangers. Such a bird would stand a grand chance for a champion prize in the show pen. The hen to match this cock may be either wheaten or partridge. Both, to my mind, are beautiful birds. The wheaten is so called because the general top colour resembles that of red wheat. It is a soft reddish cinnamon grey, whilst the breast, thighs and underparts are a pale fawn. In face, comb, wattles and ears she should be like her lord and master, a bright healthy red. The neck hackle should be a dark golden, or even inclined to chestnut, and the tail should be well clipped together, and not carried too high. The shoulders should be prominent, not hidden amongst the feathers of her breast, as we sometimes see, breast broad and full, breast-bone perfectly straight; a twisted or dented breast-bone is a disqualification both in cocks and hens. Back perfectly flat, and the body brought to a wedge shape. Legs short, thighs muscular, shins round, smooth and white.

The partridge hen resembles her in everything save colour. In this particular she requires to be a soft, even light shade of drab, inclined to the yellower rather than the chocolate side; in fact, any ruddy feathers about her wings, as on the bow and bar, would somewhat spoil her chances in the show pen, if birds with clear drab-feathered wings were opposed to her. Moreover, she must be nice and smooth in her pencilling. By pencilling I do not mean such as you see on partridge Cochins. If a feather of a good-coloured black-red Game hen be very closely examined you will see some very fine, minute black markings running irregularly across the feather. They are extremely fine, and therefore on a good feather hardly perceptible. If they show as really distinct marks or blotches it may be taken that they are too coarse. When clear elsewhere, an otherwise good bird will be spoilt by coarseness on top feathers, which run down over the secondaries of the wings. This is the first place one looks to to form an idea as to the quality of the colouring of a show hen, for quite 50 per cent. fail here, although perfect in colour in all other parts. Her feet and legs, like the wheaten, should be white. Partridge hens are very difficult to breed free from rustiness, or shaftiness. What I mean by

shaftiness is when the white shaft in the centre of the feather shows up too white and distinct. This is accounted for by the introduction of wheaten blood to brighten the colour of the cocks.

For breeding black-reds I prefer two pens, the one for cockerel and the other for pullet breeding. And, as will be seen by and by, the cockerel pen can be made more or less to do duty for breeding other than black-red cockerels where space is limited. To breed black-red cocks select the brightest-coloured male bird you can, with sound black breast and good bays on wings. To him match typical wheaten hens, white-legged like the cock, and like him good and sound in all the typical points of shoulders, breast, thighs, back, head, eye, beak, etc., which belong to a perfect specimen. Let your first object be perfect shape, broad at shoulder, short in back, low and cobby in build. Never breed from long-backed, flat-sided specimens, or the outcome of your season's labour will be a perfect failure. See that the legs are strong and firm, set well apart, head powerful, brilliant red eye, and that full daring appearance which a good Old English Game fowl has, especially when viewed from the front. From such a mating good black-red cockerels should result, as perfect in colour as the best Modern Game of the present day, and typical in other points.

If a good-bodied blue hen be introduced into this pen then good blue-breasted red cockerels should result, and there is no prettier or more taking variety than the blue-red cocks. Not only can blue-reds be produced in addition to black-reds from this pen, but by introducing a good-shaped, clear-hackled duckwing hen you can look forward to having two or three really good golden duckwing cockerels as well, and all from the same pen. Thus you see that cockerels of three distinct varieties can be bred from the same sire, and at the same time. This is a great advantage where space is limited, which is often the case with the working-man fancier, who has only perhaps a small back garden at his disposal. Not only three varieties of cockerels, but also a very fair percentage of wheaten pullets, would result also from this pen, with probably a useful blue pullet or two.

In breeding for partridge pullets, a darker, more even, and more brick-colour-red throughout kind of cock is required. The hens should be as perfect in colour as it is possible to secure, although really sound-coloured partridge hens are very rare indeed. It is all the better if it be known beforehand that the cock is descended from perfect-coloured hens of a pure pullet strain. This is half the battle in pullet

breeding. See that the hens are clear on wing from rust or shaftiness, and as fine and soft in pencilling as possible. Next to sound colour in hens, see that they approach near to the ideal *in shape;* better far sacrifice a little in point of colour, but never by any means overlook shape in hens when mating up your breeding pen, no matter what variety it is, for on the female side shape is very important. Although from such a pen you would breed good sound-coloured pullets, it would be found that the cockerels will come a little dark for the show pen. Still, with first-class judges, if these cockerels excel in character and type, they will stand a very good chance, for colour, as I have said before, is but a secondary consideration. As a rule these pullet-breeding cockerels will be found more shapely and harder in feather than the bright-coloured ones.

It is no use sacrificing the true points of an Old English to mere colour. It is false to the breed. This has been done from time to time, I know, by the introduction of brown Leghorn blood into a strain, but the effect has been not only to brighten the colour, but also to introduce a featheriness and softness inimical to the characteristics of this grand old breed. Hard feather, hard condition, good shape, style and carriage should not thus be sacrificed to a mere whim for colour. Though I am no sympathiser with cockfighting, at the same time, if we are perpetuating the true characteristics of a fighting breed, a breed whose very existence was due to the desire for hard sport on the part of its admirers, it is evident that all points which, theoretically, in this day seem to have been from necessity a *sine qua non* in the old pit days, should take prominence over mere beauty points, otherwise our fowl is no longer typical of the true Old English Game fowl. Therefore I say once more, avoid the reduction of the breed down to dubbed brown Leghorns, and the breeder will be safer with white-legged birds rather than yellow. There can be no Leghorn blood in the former, but possibly there may be a lot in the latter, and for this reason I should give preference to white-legged birds when it came to a deciding point in the show pen.

Spangles.

Of all the varieties they are, in my estimation, the most beautiful. Of course, in shape, build, and general characteristics the cock should be identical with the black-red cock, and have a good sound ruby or blood-coloured eye. This is somewhat a difficult point to get in spangles, as they are apt

to favour the yellow or daw eye, both of which are serious defects. This can easily be remedied by breeding only from rich ruby-eyed stock birds on both sides, and discarding those with a tendency to yellow or light. The hackle, back, saddle, saddle hackle and wing bow should be the same ground-colour as that of a good black-red, but should be freely and as evenly as possible spangled with white and black, which gives a very handsome appearance. Add to this a similar breast and thighs to the black-red, but as evenly spangled with white as possible. The chestnut secondaries of the black-red are here replaced by pure white, and the tail and sickles white, whilst the side hangers of the tail are black. Many good tails, however, have the feathers mostly white, with some few inches of the sickles and hangers a rich green glossy black. The wing bar is white with an occasional black feather; but it is better if both bars and secondaries are quite white.

The hen to match the cock may be either a wheaten spangle or a partridge spangle. The latter are the handsomer, as the contrast of drab, black, and white feathers is the more striking. The spangling of black and white should be as even as possible, and can be so bred by using evenly-spangled birds in the breeding pen. Should, however, there be a tendency on the part of the chicks to come too light-coloured, this may be remedied by using a dark-coloured cock and evenly-spangled hens of the medium shade. The one great advantage in breeding spangles is that both sexes can be well produced from the same pen with a facility that does not exist in any other variety. The leg colour of the spangle may be either white or yellow, but, all other points being equal, preference should be given to white-legged, but only as a deciding point where two birds are of equal merit.

Duckwings

come next in order. The cock should be silvery white or creamy white in neck hackle, some of the oldest breeders preferring the latter, free from dark striping down these feathers; his wing bow, back and saddle, a rich brassy maroon colour, having two or three rich shades of tints, and giving the impression of extra brightness and richness. The legs are white, tail and breast a good green-black, with steel-blue wing bar, and clear white on secondaries. This is often spoilt by unsightly chocolate markings, a defect which is found in quite 50 per cent. of the present-day Game, both Modern and Old English. The eye should be red, as in the black-

red, although a general failing in this variety is to be dark-eyed; still, though a defect, it is not a disqualification, and should not count too heavily against the bird in the show pen. In size, shape, carriage, etc., he should follow the black-red ideal. The hen is a lovely steel-grey in top colour and top feathers of tail, the softer the tint the better. She should be free from any blotchiness or coarse markings generally, and especially on the wings; her breast should be a pale salmon-red grey, hardly so deep as the black-red hen, as this is exceedingly difficult to obtain; still, the deeper the better, so long as the body colour, wings and back are a nice soft steel-grey. As a rule, when the deep salmon breast is obtained the body colour is found to be too dark and hard in colour. Legs should be white, and white only; her eye, a rich ruby red; and hackle, a silvery or creamy white, finely striped with black. She is a very taking bird when seen to perfection.

To breed the best duckwing cockerels use preferably a sound-coloured black-red cock and pale-hackled silver duckwing hens. See that the cock is especially sound in his breast, bars, and black generally, with good sound white wing ends, the bay running right out to the wing ends. By insisting on this point you will ensure a perfect white wing end in your cockerels, a thing much to be desired. The following year I should reserve the best-coloured cockerel, and mate him back to the old hens, preferring hens with sound breast colour. Good-coloured cockerels can be produced equally as well this way as by the black-red.

Duckwing pullets are bred from sound-coloured duckwing hens and a rather pale-coloured duckwing cock, the top colour favouring the yellow or straw colour rather than the rich maroon, and preference should be given to a bird that has been bred from a sound-coloured hen. The cockerels from this pen would be mostly silvers, the best of which should be retained for future pullet breeding. Some of the best-coloured duckwing pullets have been bred from a pullet-bred duckwing cock already described, and mating him to pure soft-coloured black-red or partridge hens from a pullet strain. A very good percentage of sound-coloured pullets can be obtained in this way.

Blue-Reds,

or what are sometimes termed blue-piles and blue-duns, now demand a few words. The cock is a strikingly handsome bird, with his golden top colour and his slate-blue where the black-red is black and the pile white, with blue and white tail,

[Photo]. ["Feathered World" Bureau.

BLACK-RED OLD ENGLISH GAME COCKEREL,

Champion Fowl at the Dairy Show, 1912.

white legs and toes. The hen is self-coloured, sound slate-blue throughout.

The breeding for colour in this variety is yet somewhat unsatisfactory, as one hardly knows what colour one may expect from special matings. Very often pure colours are bred together and with good results— *i.e.*, pure blues on both sides; but a good sound-coloured blue-breasted cock and wheaten hens have been known to produce excellent blue-breasted cockerels. The best pullets probably are bred from blue on both sides, though occasionally a decent one will come from the blue-breasted cock and wheaten cross. Another successful mating might be found for cocks by using a sound-breasted black-red cock with blue hens; this would ensure good breast colour in the blue cockerels. Still it is a bit of a lottery producing tip-top specimens of this variety, as more fixity of colour character is yet required in this variety. As time goes on this will be acquired, and then we shall expect to see blue-breasted reds taking a foremost place at our exhibitions.

Piles,

although a very popular variety with Modern Game fanciers, find few admirers in Old English circles, hence it is very rarely we meet them in the show pen, except perhaps at our first-class shows, and then they are few and far between. Why this is so we cannot say, for when produced on the right lines it is quite as handsome as some of the more popular varieties.

Piles can be bred either from piles on both sides or by mating a pale-coloured or white hen to a black-red cock. As the black-red has made such good progress towards perfection, I should be inclined to adopt the latter course to ensure good results, as the type and character would thus be more greatly enhanced, than by breeding from piles which at the present day are far behind the black-red in Old English Game characteristics. In using the black-red cock it is important to notice that he is sound in his breast, free from lacing, and a rich black, the same on shoulder points and wing bars. The bays or wing ends should also be a sound chestnut, carried out right to the end of the wing. This is absolutely necessary to ensure a rich deep bay on the pile cockerel, a striking contrast to the white wing bar. The pile cock should be white where the black-red is black, in other respects he is the same colour. Legs and feet white or yellow, former preferred; eyes red. The pile hen should

be a creamy white all over except hackle and breast; former should be a light lemon; breast pale salmon, shading lighter towards the thighs. Some prefer the deep salmon-coloured breast, but such invariably leads to rosiness on the wings, which we do not care to see in exhibition pile hens. Still, a little rosy colouring on the wing of an otherwise good Old English pile hen would not count very strongly against her in the show pen.

Piles are the best colour as a rule first season, especially the cockerels. The second and subsequent years they become marble-breasted, and are therefore unsightly in the show pen.

Nothing looks prettier, to my idea, than a rich top-coloured pile cock, with a deep chestnut bay unbroken in colour, and a spotlessly white breast, the two latter points being the most difficult to obtain, the contrast being so great. Still, by careful breeding and judicious mating for these desired points, a good percentage can be obtained.

Brown-Reds

are more popular to-day than piles, especially so at our Northern shows, whilst in type and character they are rapidly approaching the black-reds. At the Birmingham Show the cup for the best off-coloured Old English hen was secured by a brown-red.

The colour of the Old English brown-red cock differs so far greatly from the colour of the Modern brown-red: in the former the top colour is a deep orange approaching to red, whilst the latter is pale lemon. The eye of the brown-red also differs from all others, being a very dark brown, almost black, whilst the legs and beak are a dark willow, the darker the better, face dark red, inclined to mulberry, breast evenly laced with brown. The hen should be a green-black in body colour, head and neck hackle coppery, striped with black, breast laced as in the cock. Face, eyes and legs dark.

Brown-reds breed true to colour, and good birds of both sexes can be bred from the same pen, providing that the cock selected is not too dark in his top colour, and the hens free from lacing on back and shoulders, as the bright colour in the Old English brown-red cock is not nearly so important as in the modern variety, where two breeding pens must be used in order to obtain anything like satisfactory results.

Blacks and Whites

are seldom met with, except at our big events: the former are decidedly the more popular of the two. The cock should be a glossy black all over, free from any other colour whatever. Face, dark or red; eyes, ditto; legs, black. The hen should match the cock in every respect.

The whites do not appear to find favour with Old English exhibitors, probably on account of their soft feather, and are very rarely met with. The plumage should be white; eyes and face, red; legs, white or yellow.

Brassywings

would appear to be descended from blacks, as the only perceptible difference is a little brassy or dark-lemon colour on the back and shoulders of the cock.

Birchens

are offshoots from the duckwings and brown-reds, and should be very similar to the latter, with the exception that where the brown-red is a deep orange the birchen should be a silvery white; the breast lacing should be the same. In all other respects he should resemble the brown-red. Birchens may be bred by crossing a silver duckwing cockerel and a brown-red hen, and this cross is also beneficial in improving the colour of the brown-red cockerels; but the pullets from such a cross are invariably faulty in top colour, being shafty and laced on top and wing. Therefore, great care should be exercised that this cross does not get mixed in your pullet-breeding strain, or the result will be disastrous.

Besides many of the off-coloured varieties, which are far too numerous, and, as a rule, are only the sports of other established varieties, there are

Muffs and Hennies.

The former are found in nearly every colour of the more popular varieties. They derive their name from the thick growth of feathers under the throat in both male and female. The best of these I have met with in my travels are blues and black-reds. They are rather taking in the show pen, and frequently find favour with many of the present-day judges.

To the young fancier taking up Old English, I would re-

commend him to start with one of the first three or four varieties if he desires to be successful in the show pen, for it is only at the very largest exhibitions that classes are provided for the off-coloured varieties, and nothing definite has yet been arrived at in reference to the proper standard of these outside breeds. To those with only a limited space at their disposal black-reds and spangles offer the best opening, and these two popular varieties are the most successful in the show pen, and the easiest to breed true to colour and type.

The following is the Standard of Perfection, reproduced by kind permission of The Poultry Club:—

General Characteristics of Cock.

Head and Neck.—Head, medium length and tapering; beak, strong at base and slightly curved; eyes, large, bright and prominent, full of expression and alike in colour; comb, single, small, evenly serrated, erect and of fine texture; face, fine texture to match the comb and wattles; ear lobes, to match the comb and wattles as nearly as possible; wattles, fine texture and small; neck, long and very strong at junction with body; neck hackle, wiry long feathers, covering shoulders.

Body.—Breast, broad and well developed, indicative of constitutional vigour, straight breast-bone; back, short, broad across the shoulders, and flat, tapering to the tail; belly, small and compact; wings, long, full and round, inclining to meet under the tail, amply protecting the thighs and furnished with very hard quills.

Tail.—Sickle feathers abundant, broad, curved main feathers with hard strong quills.

Legs and Feet.—Thighs, short, thick and muscular, well set and held wide apart; shanks, medium length, finely and evenly scaled, not flat on shins; toes, four on each foot, should be clean, even, long and spreading, the back toe standing well backward and flat on the ground; spurs, low on the leg.

General Shape and Carriage.—Bold and smart, the movements quick and graceful, proud and sprightly as if ready for any emergency.

Handling.—Clever, flesh firm but corky and light, mellow and warm with strong contraction of the wings and legs.

Size and Weight.—5 lb. to 6 lb.

Plumage.—Hard, glossy and firm.

General Characteristics of Hen.

Head, Neck, Body.—As in the cock.
Tail.—Inclined to fan shape and carried well up.
Legs and Feet.—As in the cock.
General Shape and Carriage, Handling, Plumage.—As in the cock.
Size and Weight.—4 lb. to 5 lb.

Colour in Black-Breasted Red Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, in character with legs; eyes, red;* face, bright red; legs, any sound self colour.
In the Cock.—Neck hackle and saddle, orange red, free from dark feathers; back and shoulder coverts, deep red; wing bow, deep red; wing bar, rich dark blue; secondaries, bay colour; primaries and wing ends, black; breast and under parts, black; tail, black with lustrous green gloss.
In the Hen (Partridge).—Neck, golden red streaked with black; back and wings, partridge colour; breast and thighs, shaded salmon colour; tail, black shaded with brown.

Colour in Bright or Ginger-Red Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, in character with legs; eyes, red;* face, bright red; legs, any sound self colour.
In the Cock.—Neck hackle and saddle, light golden red, free from streaks; back and shoulders, bright red; wing bow, bright red; wing bar, rich dark blue; secondaries, bay colour; primaries and wing ends, black; breast and under parts, black shaded with brown; tail, black or black shaded with brown.
In the Hen.—Neck hackle, golden red; back and wings, a darker shade of wheaten than the breast; breast and thighs, light wheaten; tail, black with a shading of brown.

Colour in Brown-Red Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, dark horn; eyes, dark; face, red or dark; legs, dark.
In the Cock.—Neck and saddle, orange-red streaked with black; back and shoulders, dark red; wing, dark brown or

* In white-legged birds, daw eyes and a few white feathers in wings and tail are quite allowable and in character; the hackle should also be white at the roots of the feathers next the skin.

black; breast and thighs, brown or brown marked and shaded with black; tail, black.

In the Hen.—Neck hackle, black striped or shaded golden; body, black or of a uniform brown mottle; tail, black.

Colour in Red Pile Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, in character with legs; eyes, bright red;* face, brilliant red; legs, white, yellow or willow.

In the Cock.—Neck and saddle, orange or chestnut red; back and shoulders, deep red; wing bar, white; secondaries, bay on the outer edge of feathers and white on the inner edge and tips, the bay colour alone showing when wing is closed; primaries, white; breast and under parts, white; tail, white.

In the Hen.—Neck, light chestnut; breast and thighs, chestnut, shading lighter towards thighs; rest of body, white.

Colour in Silver Duckwing Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, in character with legs; eyes, red;* face, red; legs, yellow, white, olive or blue.

In the Cock.—Neck and saddle, silver white, free from dark streaks; back and shoulders, silver white; wing bow, silver white; wing bar, steel blue; secondaries, white on outer web, black on the inner web and tip of feathers, the white only showing when the wing is closed; primaries, black; breast and thighs, black; tail, black.

In the Hen.—Neck, silver striped with black; back and wings, dark grey; breast and thighs, pale fawn; tail, grey and black.

Colour in White Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, yellow; eyes, red or pearl; face scarlet red; plumage, white throughout; legs, white or yellow.

Colour in Black Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, dark; eyes, red or dark; face, red or dark; plumage, glossy black throughout; legs, sound self colour.

Colour in Brassywings.

In both Sexes.—Same as in the Black Game, with the exception of a little dark lemon on shoulders of cock.

* See note on eyes and legs, p. 15.

Colour in Spangled Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, in character with legs; eyes, red or daw; face, bright red; plumage, either black, red, blue or buff spangled with white, the spangling as even as possible; tail, black and white; legs, self colour or mottle.

Value of points in Old English Game:—

Defects.	Deduct up to
Defects in head, 4; beak, 4; eyes, 6	14
„ neck, 6; back, 8	14
„ breast and body	12
„ wings	6
„ thighs, 4; shanks, 6; spurs, 2; feet, 9	21
„ plumage	7
„ carriage	10
„ colour	8
„ handling	8
A perfect bird to count	100

Serious defects for which a bird should be passed:—Crooked or humped back, crooked breastbone, wry tail, flat shins, duck feet, bad carriage, rotten plumage, or any unsoundness.

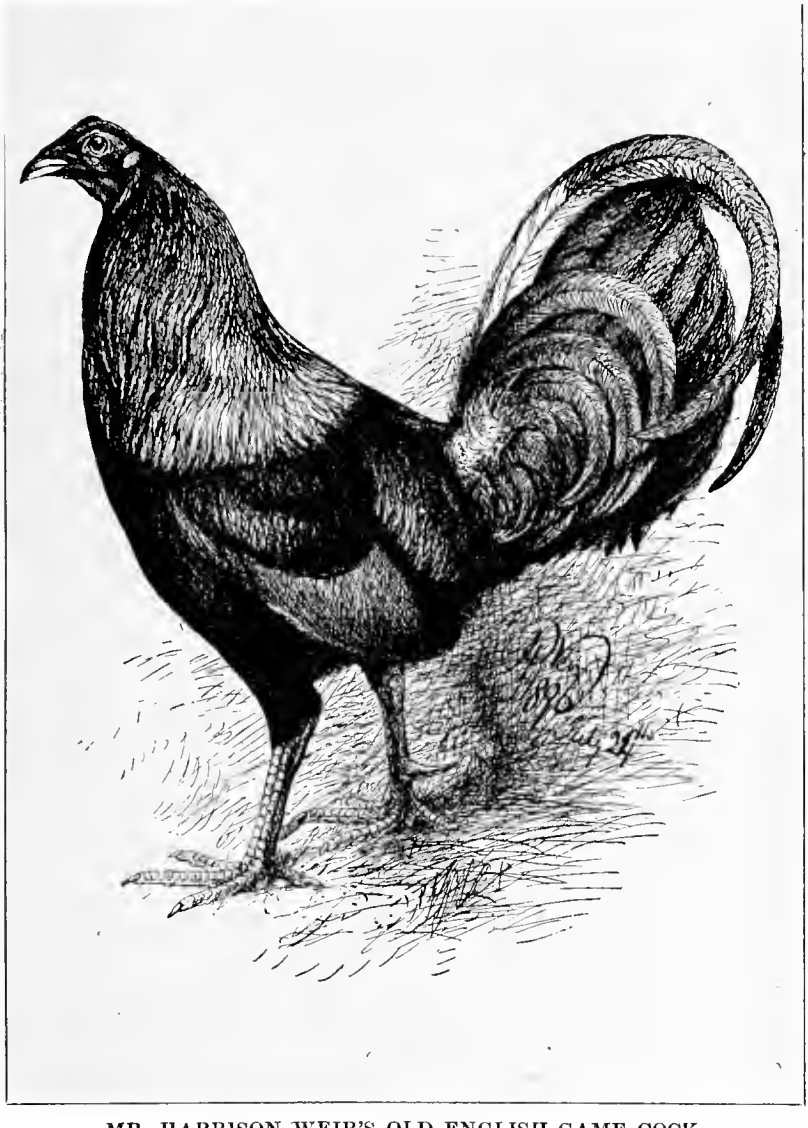
The standard of the Old English Game Fowl Club, whose ideal forms the frontispiece to this work, can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. J. Verney, 23, Beaumont Street, Oxford. Another useful book for consultation on the breed is *The Old English Game Fowl* by Herbert Atkinson, now in its third edition, post free 1s. 8d. from *The Feathered World* offices.

BREEDING AND MANAGEMENT.

In the breeding of Old English Game a few general principles may be laid down.

There must, in the first place, be nothing approaching to feebleness, undersize, or disease in the parent birds. They must be the most vigorous of the vigorous. Any degeneracy on this head will inevitably undo the breeder. The birds selected should handle hard and light, and have a springy, elastic, corky feel about them. The breast-bone must be straight, the breast full, the feet sound, head full of fire, with a ruby eye, thighs short, round and stout, and back wedge-shaped. The age should not as a rule exceed three years for the cock, and especially in his third season should his harem be kept few in number. At any time, the fewer the hens or pullets, the more vigorous are the chickens likely to be. Cockerels should never be less than nine months, and, where size, bone and strength be required, should be over twelve months old, and a cross should always be resorted to as soon as it is seen that the yard is losing ground on these points. A safe rule is to mate a two-year-old cock with pullets March or April hatched, and a cockerel not under nine months with two-year-old hens. The in-breeding necessary to retain type and colour should never exceed three years at the most, or the strain will become enfeebled.

Old English thrive naturally where there is an unlimited grass run. They are especially suited to the northern counties of England, and some of the best specimens have hailed from Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and the borders of Northumberland. The northern climate produces harder feather than the more relaxing conditions of the south country. By roosting the birds in trees at night, greater vigour and better health with hard feather is secured; and such sleeping places, even in the depth of winter, secure for the birds great immunity from roup and other ailments, whilst condition and bloom are everything that can be desired. The one drawback to such a system is the necessity for withdrawing birds from these roosting places for exhibition purposes. They then have to pass a night or two in a warm room, and it would be disastrous to turn the birds out again into the open air to sleep after their return.



MR. HARRISON WEIR'S OLD ENGLISH GAME COCK.

Perches.

Proper perches are an absolute necessity to all kinds of Game fowl. Branches of trees being round and covered with bark, and generally selected by the bird of a size that is easily and firmly grasped, afford a good illustration of what is required when perches have to be provided indoors.

For bark, wrappings of hemp or other soft material may be substituted, so that the breast-bone of the fowl comes by no injury, as a crooked breast destroys all a bird's chances in the show pen, and is also an unsightly thing—difficult to carve too, on a table. Never perch the birds too high from the ground. Give them plenty of room to fly down, or the soft yielding bone of the breast of young birds may easily become deformed. The force with which the breast of a bird can come in contact with the hard floor, when the flight is too steep, is surprising, and from this cause many a good bird has been utterly ruined. Not only the breast-bone but also the feet have been completely crippled by being perched too high. How often do we notice in the show pen birds with bumble feet, enlarged joints, etc., thrown out of the prize lists completely, and all this caused simply by perching the birds too high and allowing them to fly down on to the hard floor of the roosting house. For Game fowl the perches should never exceed three feet from the ground, and then the floor should have a liberal covering of peat moss litter or chaff, to soften the fall. Never use flat perches, or your birds will become duck-footed, and as such are useless as exhibition specimens. Therefore it will at once be seen that proper perching of all Game fowl is highly important, and should nowise be overlooked.

Feeding.

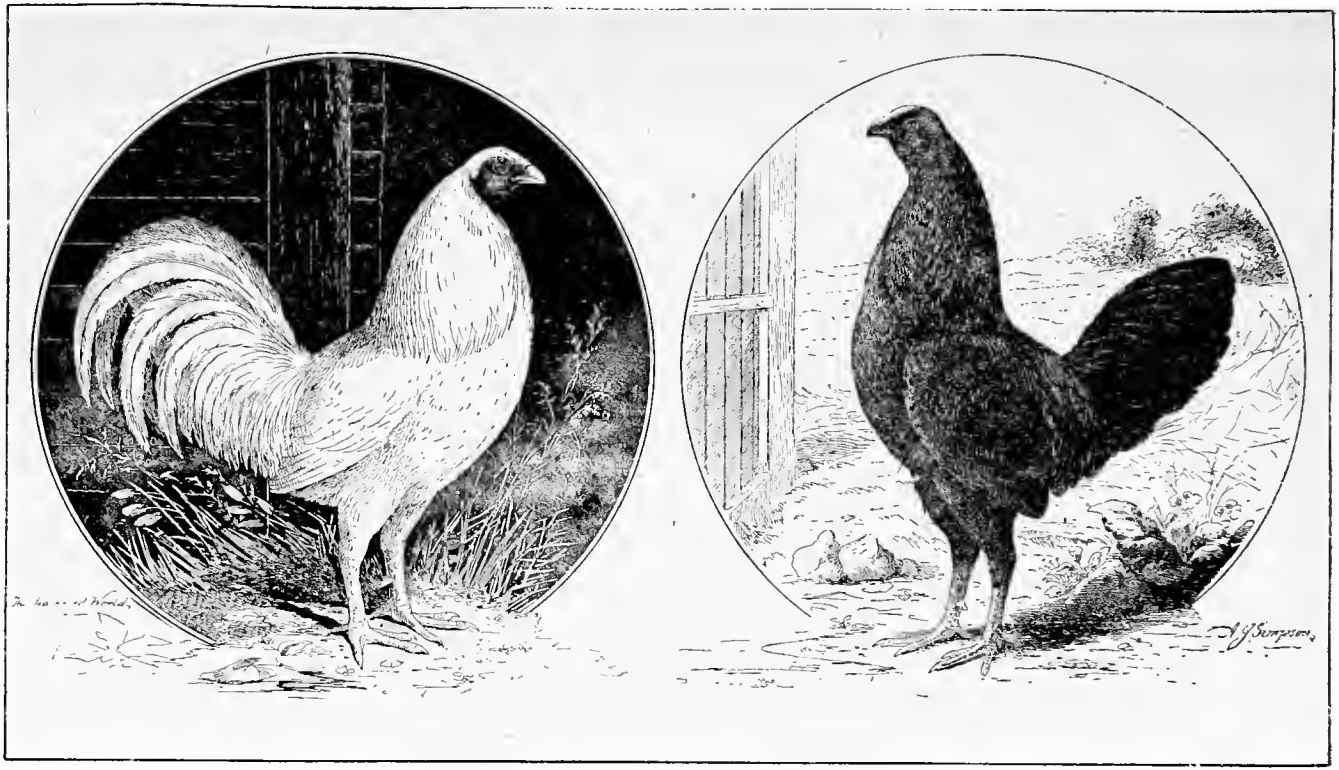
To keep the birds in good condition feed them well and regularly. In winter time the food should be of a warmth-giving nature, and as a first feed in the morning nothing is better than biscuit meal, well scalded with boiling water, and afterwards, when properly soaked, mixed with good Scotch oatmeal and fine sharps until of a crumbly nature. Good, sound English wheat at night cannot be beaten. See that it is sound and dry, for this is most important. Nothing is more injurious to fowls than damp, unsound corn with any tendency to mildew; if there be any suspicion of dampness, put it to the oven to dry and harden; the harder the corn the better.

For a change from wheat—and change of food is always beneficial—give short stout oats or barley. Barley is best given during the coldest weather, and wheat in the summer months. Don't throw the food down indiscriminately in a heap, but scatter it about judiciously, and only give enough, so that every grain is picked up. As soon as the birds give over eating rapidly don't throw more down; then by the time they are satisfied all the food will have been picked up. Food allowed to remain on the ground for long causes disease, and upsets the birds' liver and digestion. Therefore it is much better to rather stint the birds than give them too much.

Dubbing.

The dubbing of Game fowl is a practice which has obtained from earliest time, and I think must and will be continued as long as there are Game fowl to dub. Game are very pugnacious by nature, and therefore dubbing is justified by necessity, for it would be impossible to keep any number of cockerels together after puberty is reached without resorting to the practice. Moreover, the irritation caused by the constant pecking and tearing of the comb, during a succession of fights, is infinitely more painful than that produced by the needful operation of dubbing, which can easily be completed in two or three minutes at the most.

In dubbing Old English it is not necessary to cut so near to the head as in dubbing Modern Game, for by leaving a slight margin of the base of the comb, it gives the head a stronger appearance than when cut low down. Curved scissors should always be used, which are manufactured for the purpose, and cost about four or five shillings. The bird should be held by an assistant whilst the operator first cuts off the lobes and wattles. The comb is the last to come off, and should be taken with one long sweeping cut. In this way very little pain is given. A sponge with a little warm water is then applied to the head, and the wounded parts may be smeared with vaseline the day following the operation. In from eight to ten days all traces of the operation will have departed, beyond just a little paleness here and there, where the more gristly parts of the comb and wattles have been.



WHITE COCK. **OLD ENGLISH GAME.** BLACK HENNY COCKEREL.

Preparing for Exhibition.

This is a very important part of the programme. Many a good bird has been spoiled through want of training. A bird that dashes about the pen when approached stands a very small chance of success in the show pen. The judges of to-day have so much work to perform when judging in the time allotted to them that they cannot stand on one side and wait until the bird has finally settled down; they have no alternative but to pass the bird with a remark in their judging book that he is "wild in pen". I have met scores of them when judging—birds that had they been properly trained would have stood very high in the prize list.

In the first place, procure one or two 27-inch wire show pens. Any poultry appliance maker will supply them for about half-a-crown. Put the bird in at night time and allow him to get used to the pen before beginning operations. Let him remain perfectly quiet. The next morning get a little bread and milk and approach the pen slowly, speaking kindly to the bird at the same time. Then feed him through the wires very gently. In a little while he will come boldly up to eat the bread and milk. The same night repeat the same process, and after he has partaken of the food from your hand, gently open the door and stroke the bird slowly down the breast from the throat. Do this a few times, and you will be surprised how soon he learns to stand perfectly still and appears to enjoy your caresses. Then quietly and gently stroke him on the back from the hackle to the tail, talking softly to him all the time, and at the same time giving him little tit-bits of bread-sop or lean meat. In three or four days the bird will have become quite docile and will stand boldly up to the front of the pen when you approach without the slightest fear. After getting him settled down to his work, use a small cane instead of the hand. A week will be found quite long enough for even the wildest bird, and once properly trained they never forget it, no matter if they don't see the inside of a pen for months. In getting the bird into proper exhibition form the following loaf should be used, a few pieces steeped in sherry, and given to the bird last thing at night. Procure a half-pennyworth of balm, one pennyworth of sugar candy, ¼ lb. lump sugar, five whites of eggs, two yolks, a piece of fresh butter the size of a walnut, and 1½ lb. of flour. Crush the sugar candy and loaf sugar well together. When baked properly this loaf will keep

sweet and good for two or three months if kept wrapped up in a cloth, and will be found one of the finest pick-me-ups for turning out a Game fowl as fit as a fiddle, as the saying goes. To the young fancier whose birds have hitherto been beaten in condition this is a valuable tip.

Before despatching the bird to the show, it is necessary to sponge the head and face with warm water. The legs also should be well soaked in hot water as hot as you can comfortably bear the back of your hand in. Let them soak for three or four minutes, then take a piece of soap and a nail brush and thoroughly scrub the legs and feet till all traces of dirt have disappeared. There will always be a little dirt under the scales, but this can easily be removed by getting a piece of wood and sharpening it to a fine point, then insert under the scales from one side to the other gently, so as not to break off the scales. This will remove every particle of dirt from under the scales. Dry the legs, then polish well with a piece of rough dry flannel, rubbing briskly until they are as smooth as glass. This process will put an excellent polish on any leg, whether white or yellow, and where the latter is inclined to be pale, it will materially improve the colour.

And now I think I have told my readers all that is worth knowing about this grand old breed as an exhibition bird. The Old English Game is a noble fowl, strong, fearless and ever on the alert, beautiful in plumage, graceful in carriage, and a champion amongst other fowls. The hen is a model mother, both as regards hatching and looking after her chicks, and bold to a degree when danger threatens her little ones. She is a fair layer of richly-flavoured eggs, and both sexes afford the finest quality of poultry flesh to be found upon the table. Whether we look at the Old English Game from the exhibition side or the utility one, there is everything to give us satisfaction. The chicks are easy to rear, which again is in its favour; in fact, it matters not in what way we view this fine old breed, it stands out of the pack of all other varieties as the Ace of Trumps.

PART II.

MODERN GAME.

Introduction.

In presenting my readers with the following Chapters on Modern Game, their points and manner of breeding, I do so in the sincere hope that I may be able to infuse a little more enthusiasm into this portion of the Fancy than seems at present to exist.

We naturally ask, "How is it that the Modern Game has dwindled down to its present dimensions?" for of all classes at present-day shows the Modern Game are nearly always the most disappointing.

Take, for instance, Birkenhead Show, September, 1902, with a Game Club judge wielding the wand. The result was humiliating. An average of about 2 per class. The reason is soon explained. It is the old tale over again, and, wherever it has to be told the same results follow. *Modern Game have fallen into too few hands.* It is a fatal mistake. What encouragement is there nowadays to take up Modern Game?

The novice, that truly necessary individual to the success of any breed, finds no incentive to action. He does not know the ins and outs of breeding like the old hands. Very often his cash-box is not so deep that he cannot find the bottom. But when he has found the bottom or thereabout in his endeavour to make a start in the Modern Game Fancy, the superior knowledge of the old hands, coupled with the fact that they *never* let the best out of their keeping, even if the "till" were emptied a dozen times over, brings about the result that at the end of a few seasons' breeding, the young aspirant still finds himself nowhere.

The deck-sweepers are upon him. He cannot stand, with all his British pluck, being constantly knocked down before he has had time to rise to his knees as it were. The British fancier has always looked to the cash side, as well as the Fancy side, and he naturally expects some adequate return

for capital, perseverance, time, trouble, expense of rent, labour, houses and food. Now if anything that I can here say will tend to the amelioration of this sad state of things, I unflinchingly say it. Let present breeders consider that they cannot eat their cake themselves and have it. They have a right to win on their experience and superior knowledge of breeding, but if they are men of heart they will see that this should be sufficient without reserving to themselves the major portion of the handicap, *viz.*, the *superlative* breeding stock as well.

Now I am satisfied that, with greater liberality in the way I have here indicated, we should soon have a different order of things. I dare not predict it in other breeds which have gone down as the result of deck-sweeping, but Game is different.

In this work I have used my best efforts to put the tyro on a footing with the old hands by going carefully into the mating, breeding and preparing for exhibition. From what I have written he should easily be able to recognise the type required, and if he be allowed the privilege, for an equivalent of the present currency, by such birds being placed within his reach, all will go well, and we shall once more see the Modern Game forging to the front, and the classes at our shows monopolising that extended area of pens we were wont to see at our best shows some few years ago.

Chief Characteristics.

Proceeding to the individual varieties as they appear at present-day exhibitions, the principal ones are five in number, viz., black-reds, brown-reds, piles, duckwings and birchens. I will take them in the order here given, after a statement of the chief characteristics common to all and every variety.

Beginning with the cock, his general appearance to a novice would be that of an extremely long-legged bird, finely built, with a well-carved away body, an apology of a tail, and any amount of length of neck and head, but wherewithal scanty, hard and narrow of feather all over. Descending to particulars, we find this general type exactly carried out in the best specimens.

The head should be long and narrow, snaky, as it is termed, with a strong, long, well-curved beak. Very little skull should appear above the eye, the less the better. The eye itself should be full, bold and daring, giving a nonchalant

expression to the clear red face and throat, which should be free from all coarse feathers.

The neck sets off the head. It should be long and fine, with the narrowest and shortest feather possible, so short that at the base of the neck it fails to reach and cover the shoulders at all. Whatever its colour may be, the saddle feathers should be short and narrow. The breast should be broad and carried erect, and the long thighs so placed that when the bird puts itself to its fullest reach, neck, breast and legs are not far out of a perpendicular straight line. And this power of reach is a *sine qua non*. A bird that carries itself duck fashion is utterly worthless. What is wanted is the capability, as the housemaid recently put it in one of Mr. Bernard Partridge's admirable sketches, to stretch. When applying for a situation she asked her mistress, "Shall I have to hand the things round at the table, *or do you stretch?*" A bird that cannot stretch up and far is useless.

Then the feet are most important items. The toes must be long and straight and firmly placed upon the ground. The hind toe sometimes fails to touch the ground, at other times it is not planted down in a straight line opposite in direction to the centre middle toe, but takes a forward position inwards towards the first toe. Such defects amount to absolutely disqualification points, and the cook is, strictly speaking, the only person to deal adequately with such a specimen. Now, the shanks also require a word. They should be fine and, above all things, round. No genuine fancier or judge will tolerate flat shins; it is a sign of hereditary weakness. Mark well the distance from the back of the thighs to the end of body; it should be short and well cut away. When a good specimen is in hand it is wonderful how little there is to feel. If the bird be short here, the wings will be short, the back short (as it should be), and the shape, in most cases, correct.

These short-backed ones are generally very broad at the shoulders, with shoulder butts standing out prominently, giving a strong but keen, agile impression ready for anything.

The general appearance of the body is more or less that of a box iron for laundry purposes, save and except that from the square front to the point the body is cut away upwards, and after the manner of a wedge. The tail is another important feature. Its carriage must be low. The tail proper is short and narrow in feather, tightly held together, and by no manner of means formed after the fashion of a Hamburgh. The sickle feathers are short and as narrow

as they can be got; the side feathers, or hangers as they are called, are a mere apology, narrow and short as they can be grown.

The tail is a feature that has for many years been greatly attended to, and breeders of twenty years ago, who rejoiced to think they were then possessed of fine whip tails, would simply find themselves nowhere in present-day competitions.

Now, I have endeavoured to give the general characteristics of an ideal cockerel. The pullet follows, so far as a hen can follow the cock, on the same lines. She must be fine in head, the neatest and smallest of combs, with long, fine neck, bright red face and ears, and the shortest of feathering upon the neck, as everywhere else. She, too, should have full, broad chest, round, long legs and thighs, toes as in the cockerel, and general shape of the body the same. The less lumber there is about her the better. She wants the same flat-iron shaped body, prominent wing butts, short wings, and a fine whip tail of very narrow feathers held well together. There is about her a general appearance of being extremely well groomed, owing to the tightness, shortness and narrowness of her feathering, and the upright, sprightly carriage which no other breed of fancy poultry possesses. If she is for the most part coloured on body and tail, as in the black-red and duckwing varieties, the well-groomed appearance is aided by extreme evenness of ground colour and pencilling, but this will be entered into more fully as I take each variety in turn.

I conclude this chapter by advising all would-be breeders to get their stock of the best. Wait until you can pay a decent price, then fix upon some prominent winning strain belonging to a thoroughly reliable man, and then go to him, explain your wants, and discreetly put yourself upon his honesty. Satisfy yourself whether you wish to breed cockerels or pullets. It is better that you know your own mind in this matter at the start, as the very best specimens, as a rule, do not come from a mixture of cockerel and pullet strains, but this again is a point that will be dealt with in treating separately of each variety. Then, when you have made a start with a certain strain, keep to that strain. Do not court disaster by chopping about from strain to strain, mixing up this and that for the mere reason that you think you have the opportunity to buy a good bird cheaply from some other strain. Blood will tell in the long run. It always has, it always will, so be advised, and, once embarked on a strain, keep to it as long as you can possibly rear healthy chickens, and when fresh blood is required go to some one

who commenced with, and has kept, to the same strain as yourself. Never breed from an unhealthy bird, never use one in the breeding pen that has a flaw amounting to a disqualification. There may be faults, there will be. There never was a bird of any kind absolutely correct, but never perpetuate a fault by double breeding, *i.e.*, never have the same fault in both cock and hen. Give your breeding stock the best value of food obtainable. Do not coop them up more than is absolutely necessary, and if they have to be limited see that such treatment does not run them into fat and render abortive your attempts to breed successfully from them. Keep them in fair condition, but flat-iron birds mean few eggs and delicate chickens. It is simply marvellous how Game birds confined can, in a very short space of time, become internally one mass of fat, overlaying all the internal organs, and sometimes resulting in sudden death. At breeding time they are generally voracious in appetite, and it requires much determination on the part of owners of some strains to run them on somewhat short commons, that disaster may not ensue.

Black-Reds.

I now take up the variety known as black-reds, as it has now for so long held the premier place at our exhibitions, and, in almost all works treating of English Game, takes precedence over other varieties. The exhibition cock should follow the general lines I have laid down for all varieties of Game as regards shape, size, style, reach, etc.—that is to say, head long, fine and narrow, with eye alert, placed well up in his head, so as to come as near to the top of the head as possible, with long, strong, horn-coloured beak, giving the head, roughly speaking, more of the general contour of that of the Common Pheasant than the ordinary barn yard fowl. The unfeathered skin of the face must be a bright cherry red, smooth, and of good texture, and the whole impression derived from the head must be what is called "snaky," a conglomeration of boldness, cunning and alertness. The neck should be long and fine, hackle very short, just touching the shoulders, of the brightest orange possible, corresponding in some measure with the hackle feathers of the saddle, which, however, as a rule, are a lighter and brighter orange still.

The front view of a good bird is especially captivating. The breast is black, free from any blots, spangles, or lacings of rusty colour, and so carried that neck, breast and legs come into an almost perpendicular line. The rich black should extend down to the shanks, but in many cases the hocks

betray more than a suspicion of rusty feathers. Sometimes it is a case of "where they are," often a naked place to show "where they were".

The shoulder points should be noticeable as the bird shows itself from the front, standing out square and prominent, and the thighs should be fully visible up to and including the joint with the body, in fact, as the bird reaches to its full height the place of the joint is clearly discernible, and gives the impression of extra tallness. Many a bird never gets itself so that the thigh can be seen in this manner, but the upper part seems hidden in the body. This arises from deficiency of limb, or want of reach, or both; but such a bird is severely handicapped in the show pen nowadays.

Now, if we look at the bird sideways, we want no long boat shape nor straight long-sided wings, no rust on bars or shoulder points. He must be short from neck to tail, shoulder points jet black, with brightest crimson on shoulders and across back, not peppered or broken with black, but standing as whole and entire as possible in one unbroken patch, whilst the bay of the wing should be a bright chestnut, going through to the end of the wing, and accompanied by a lustrous steel black bar and steppings. The tail should be carried fairly low, with the feathering as narrow and short as possible, a rich green black and well whipped up together. Turn him round now and view him from behind. The back is flat-iron shaped, the more so the better. Coming round to the front again we examine shanks, toes, nails, etc. The shanks and toes should be as long as possible, willow or olive, and the back toe well placed on the ground. If he is duck-footed, wring his neck. He can have but one use, viz., the table. The nails should be long and strong.

Now, if you possess a black-red up to this description, show him by all means. He will give a good account of himself.

The exhibition hen is in many respects like her lord. She must be very tall, very reachy, broad in front, high and prominent in shoulders, flat-iron shaped in body, fine and short in feather, good and sound in shanks (no flat shins, they are an abomination), long toes, shanks and thighs, the latter set well apart, not knock-kneed, a very common fault. She is, of course, snaky in head, like the cock, but more refined, but quality and colour of the eye must be the same. The hackle, extremely short, should be a nice pale golden colour, with a black stripe down the centre of the feather (a narrow line on each side of the shaft), and dark caps should be avoided.

The breast may be described as a broken salmon red, which should descend from throat downwards, getting paler in colour towards the thighs. Some pullets are much paler in breast colour than others, but the deeper and richer salmon is most admired. The top colour is somewhat difficult to describe without a coloured plate, and still I have never yet seen a really good representation of the colour of a black-red Game hen. Generally it is spoken of as partridge, by which would be understood a brown finely pencilled with black—so finely that the pencilling is almost lost to view. Yet there is a particular hue and cast of colour about it more of a drab than a brown. The pencilling referred to above is a great point. There must be no dark bars, blotches, or lacing about it anywhere, and the place to look most particularly is the end of the secondaries or upper feathers of the wings, which are the last in the adult stage to take the place of the chicken feathers. It is a very purely coloured bird where these can be found smooth and soft, free from streaks, lines or blotches.

Again, the wing must be of the same soft tone of colour as the back, and not rusty or flushed more or less with a deeper tone of breast colour. Such would be fatal, if strongly found, to any exhibition bird. Colour counts so much that no bird with any great flaw therein would have much chance nowadays in a show pen, although valuable as a cock breeder.

We now come to mating. Two pens are better than one.

For cock breeding colour can be got very bright in two ways. One by the employment of wheaten hens, and the other by using the very palest clear capped and clear hackled partridge hens. These are shades lighter (and often more yellow drab colour) than exhibition pullets. Many breeders swear by the latter, and such would be my choice in mating up the cock-breeding pen.

Make certain that the pullets are bred from a cock breeding strain, or light partridge blood, or you will find yourself with a lot of dull coloured cockerels on your hands by-and-bye, utterly unfit for exhibition.

Game breeding stands no happy-go-lucky work of any kind. However, it is possible to breed some winners of both sexes from one pen by using two cock-breeding hens or pullets, very pale hackles and red-sided, and the number of sound coloured exhibition hens, as pale in hackle as possible. Then, if the cock is fairly bright of a pullet strain, you can reasonably expect a few winners of both cockerels and pullets from this pen. Still, this course should only be pursued when space is limited, and I would prefer to confine my attention to either cockerel or pullet breeding, and not

to both. Where both are pursued the greatest care has to be exercised, and the breeding stock kept well apart. Should a wheaten-bred cock cross into the pullet strain, it would cause such havoc as no one, in these rapid days of advancement, could afford, either in time or cost, to eliminate. It would be a case of a fresh start, for the two could not be induced to amalgamate with anything like satisfactory results for many years.

In mating up your cock-breeding pens, see that you have shape, style and reach in your pullets and bright colour and reach in the cock. Never breed from short-legged, faulty-shaped pullets, or your labour will be in vain. In pullet breeding the hens and pullets must be perfectly sound in colour, free from rustiness or shaftiness, and not too dark. They must excel in shape and be as tall as possible, whilst the cock should be a brickish red colour, one even shade from neck to tail, not shaded off in hackles, as in the cock breeder. Follow these lines and you won't get far wrong. Black-reds, if properly mated, are easily bred, and produce a larger percentage of winners, perhaps, than any variety of Game.

Brown-Reds.

Brown-reds will now engage our attention. This is a most handsome variety, and come next to black-reds in popularity. For many years brown-reds have held their own in the show pen, and have, like the black-reds, commanded fabulous prices. Mentioning high prices brings to our mind the sale of Mr. Hugo Ainscough's Birmingham winning black-red cock to the king of Game fanciers, viz., Capt. Heaton, for £200 some few years ago. Again in 1901 at the same show Mr. Ainscough, we are informed, sold a cockerel for £100. Returning to brown-reds, we remember some eight or nine years ago that fourteen brown-red Game changed hands for the princely sum of £700, or £50 per bird. These, of course, are records and not every-day sales, still they go to show what really first-class exhibition specimens of Game fowl will fetch, and prove what the Yankee says—there is money in them.

Until the last year or two the brown-reds, like the brown-red Bantams, were in the hands of two or three, but now things are altered. Young fanciers and breeders have persevered until they have come to the front, so that at *the* Game show of the world—viz., Birmingham—we find old stagers behind breeders of only three or four years' experience. It is very fortunate that this is so, as it gives the breed

a stimulus just at a time that it was in danger of losing ground owing to the deck-sweeping of one or two exhibitors.

Brown-reds are not, if properly understood, so very difficult to breed. In fact, quite recently we heard one party at a show, well known for the excellence of his strain, affirm that so true did they breed to the parents, that his great difficulty was, not so much to produce a winner, but to find in what way one bird excelled another; they are, as he said, like "peas in a pod". But it must be understood that this fancier knows very thoroughly the way he is working. I do not mean to say that any novice who has a mind to pick up any cheap specimens and mate them together irrespective of strain will produce a yard full of winners, or even a single one, but, rather, that when a strain has really been got together, first class as to quality, and the strain thoroughly under control in its owner's hands, it can be made, in the produce, to show a fine percentage of winners, second to no other variety in this respect, and such as to gratify the most expectant mind.

And now to describe the brown-red. In the Game points of size, style, shape and reach, they are Game birds all over. It is merely the colour that makes the bird a brown-red as distinguished from a black-red or a pile.

In colour the cock approaches the former in that he is a mixture, black and warm colour. If he be turned with his breast towards you he is easily recognised at a glance. It is a rich black, lightly but regularly laced round each feather from the throat down to the thighs, with pale gold lacing, and that I may not have to revert to this point again in the hen, I may here say that she is a rich black all over, save for two points, this same lacing on her breast and her neck hackle, which, like that of the cock, is a pale lemon, but striped narrowly with black. The breast feathers also have the shaft showing clearly.

To finish off the description of the cock I may say that his saddle is a rich but pale lemon to match the neck hackle, whilst the wing bows and back are a deeper but still very rich lemon colour. Unlike the black-red, he has no bays on wings, and probably on this account is a less taking bird with some than the black-red, which, taken all in all, has a larger proportion of rich colour, contrasting with the black, than the brown-reds have. Still the lemon top colour is very taking indeed. Formerly it was more or less of an orange, but that has long since been a thing of the past, though the superior brightness of present-day stock has doubtless been acquired at some loss of hardness of feather

and shape, for it will invariably be noticed that, the lighter a bird runs in colour, the softer is the handling. So that the new lemon tinge is not (beautiful as it appears) an unqualified success. I contend that shape and type (which includes hardness of feather) should come before considerations of colour, otherwise we are getting more rapidly away from the original Game idea than ever.

With this brief description I may pass on to the mating, which is the most important part of the programme.

Again, two pens are necessary. For cockerel breeding we want a perfect exhibition cock or cockerel, a black-eyed mulberry-faced bird with bright top colour, plentifully bestowed, and the clearest breast lacing, supplied in no niggardly fashion. But at the same time he should have clear black shoulder butts, and herein lies the great difficulty. Quite 50 per cent. of the present-day exhibition brown-red cockerels fail in this respect: they are laced on the shoulder butts instead of being black, and this is a serious fault. Try and guard against this as far as you can, yet have the top colour as profuse and as rich a lemon as possible. Bear in mind that you will get your colour from the male bird, and the shape from the hens. To a cock or cockerel as I have described mate cockerel-breeding pullets. In the first place they must be typical Game shape, tall, square-shouldered, wing butts prominent and carried high, short in back, and narrow towards the stern, long in shank and sound in feet, hackle as pale a lemon right up to the crown of head as is possible to get. Never use dark-capped pullets for cockerel breeding, as it is labour in vain. If the pullets are laced on shoulder and back so much the better, so long as they are a pale lemon to top of head. About three pullets to a cock will be found most satisfactory for cock breeding, as you want size and reach.

For pullet breeding great discretion is required to select a cock of pullet-breeding strain. Go to some breeder who has figured most prominently in pullets at our leading shows, and buy a cockerel the same way bred as his winning pullets. As a rule pullet breeding cocks are a much darker top colour, more of a dark orange than lemon. See that he is specially good in breast lacing, even and distinctly laced from throat down to thighs, not blurred or indistinct. Shoulder butts and wing bar must be a sound black, no lacing whatever; this is highly important. He should be as shapely and as tall as you can get him, but, as I said before, it is essential that he should be of a pure pullet-breeding strain. To such a bird you must mate exhibition pullets, *i.e.*, pullets perfectly

sound in colour. They must be tall and typical in shape, prominent shoulder butts, carried high, pure green-black body colour, free from shaftiness or lacing. In cock-breeding pullets the centre shaft of the feather shows lemon or golden; but in pullet breeding this is not so. The whole body and wings should be greenish-black, with lemon hackle, narrowly striped with black and as clear as possible towards the comb. Many pullets run quite coppery, or even darker, in cap. This should be guarded against, as it is a serious defect. Try and get them a pure lemon to crown of head; but, at the same time, take care that they do not show lacing on back for pullet breeding. In brown-reds, both cock and hen, the eye is an important feature. It must be as dark as dark can be. A light eye is a sure indication of a cross at some time or other.

If only one pen of birds can be mated up, and it is desired to breed both exhibition cockerels and pullets, then it will be a case of selecting two or three hens, such as I have described for cockerel breeding, and two or three exhibition hens, putting them all to an exhibition cock and looking for a fairly satisfactory result. But where it is possible to mate up two pens, do so by all means; still every working-man fancier cannot afford to do this.

Before leaving brown-reds I ought to advert to the introduction of birchen blood into many strains. It certainly did lighten matters up, and gave that bright lemon colour, but at the same time it greatly interfered with the dark gipsy face which is so essential to brown-reds. There is now no necessity to pursue such a course, as the desired tint has been secured long ago, and therefore there is really nothing to gain by resorting to birchen cross. If your stock is not bright enough, why then invest in a rich bright-coloured cockerel, and mate up as I have already stated. If you have to give your bottom dollar for it, it will pay you in the long run. There are plenty of bright lemon cockerels ready to hand. In these busy times of keen competition there is no time for retrogression to antique ways, and so with this piece of advice I will pass on to piles.

Piles.

We now come to the most beautiful of all varieties of Game, but, at the same time, to the one admittedly the most difficult to breed.

Beautiful as are pile Game, probably by reason of the sharper colour contrast which exists in them than in the other varieties, they have just this one great drawback, good

specimens are not so easily produced, notwithstanding the most careful mating. A much larger flock of youngsters has to be reared annually than in the other varieties before a "flyer" can be produced, and when he is produced he does not command as high a price as a first-class black-red or brown-red, although both the latter are easier to produce and easier to keep in show condition than the pile. Still, notwithstanding these drawbacks, this beautiful variety finds many admirers, who do not seem to mind the extra trouble of preparing for the show pen, and which is no small task unless kept under most favourable circumstances.

Like all birds with much white in their plumage, they require a bath to get them into proper show condition; at the same time the cleaner they can be kept, so as to relieve them from the feather-softening influence of soap and water, the better.

It is possible, where the fancier has a good clean grass run away from the smoke of large chimneys, with due care to run a bird at many shows held about the same time with very little washing, but it must be protected from the weather, and be provided with the cleanest of runs and houses, otherwise the tub will be a *sine quâ non*, for in these days of severe competition no exhibitor can afford to throw a single point away in the matter of exhibiting his birds. Therefore, where the young fancier or beginner cannot command a run such as I have described, I would not recommend him to take up pile Game. If he is near the smoke of a manufacturing town let him take up black or brown-reds if he is desirous of becoming successful in the exhibition pen.

Piles in length of limb probably surpass other varieties in the best exhibition specimens, otherwise in all points of shape, style, size and reach, the description given for Game birds in general holds good with them too.

A good pile, therefore, must be of the tallest, short and hard in feather, wedge shape in body, high and prominent in shoulder, broad chested, cleanly cut away behind, with short wings clasped tightly to the body, a neat whip tail carried slightly above the level of the body, and as fine in sickle as possible. Head long, lean and snaky with a bold alert red eye. To easily describe the colour of the exhibitor's pile cock I must refer my readers back to the chapter on black-reds, for where a first-class exhibition black-red is *black*, the pile cock should be *white*, the top colour precisely the same in both. I have seen piles with a top colour all through one dark brick-red colour winning at the Palace, but this is wrong. A black-red of this colour would not even be mentioned in

the prize-list however good he might be in other points; then why should a pile?

The two great failings in piles are the difficulty in obtaining a perfectly sound white breast free from lacing, ticking or smokiness, together with a rich top colour and dark chestnut bays, or wing ends. Quite 50 per cent. of piles fail in these two points, both of which are highly important in exhibition specimens.

A cockerel with a laced or smoky breast has very little chance of success in these days of keen competition, whilst weak bays are almost as great a drawback. The leg colour, too, is a very important point with some judges. This should be a rich orange yellow, the richer the better. Soil has a great deal to do with the leg colour. Where the land is a heavy clay, the leg colour will always be good, but where the soil is limestone and dry the yellow will always be much paler.

The pile hen should be a clear white all over save her breast and neck hackle. The breast may be described as a good warm-tinted chestnut, as deep in colour as possible, providing it does not affect the wing colour. It is one of the greatest difficulties to breed a pile pullet perfectly clear on wing, free from any tinge of red or creaminess, and at the same time having a rich, deep salmon breast. Where the body colour is specially clear, the breast will invariably be found too pale, and where the latter is very deep, the wing will be found to be tinged with red; still, where the body colour is absolutely clear, some allowance can be made for a little weakness in breast colour. The neck hackle should be a pale lemon.

Now for the breeding pens. A double one is usually required. It is more or less guesswork going on the one pen system. Necessity may drive a breeder to it, but I always advocate the dual system whenever it can be practised.

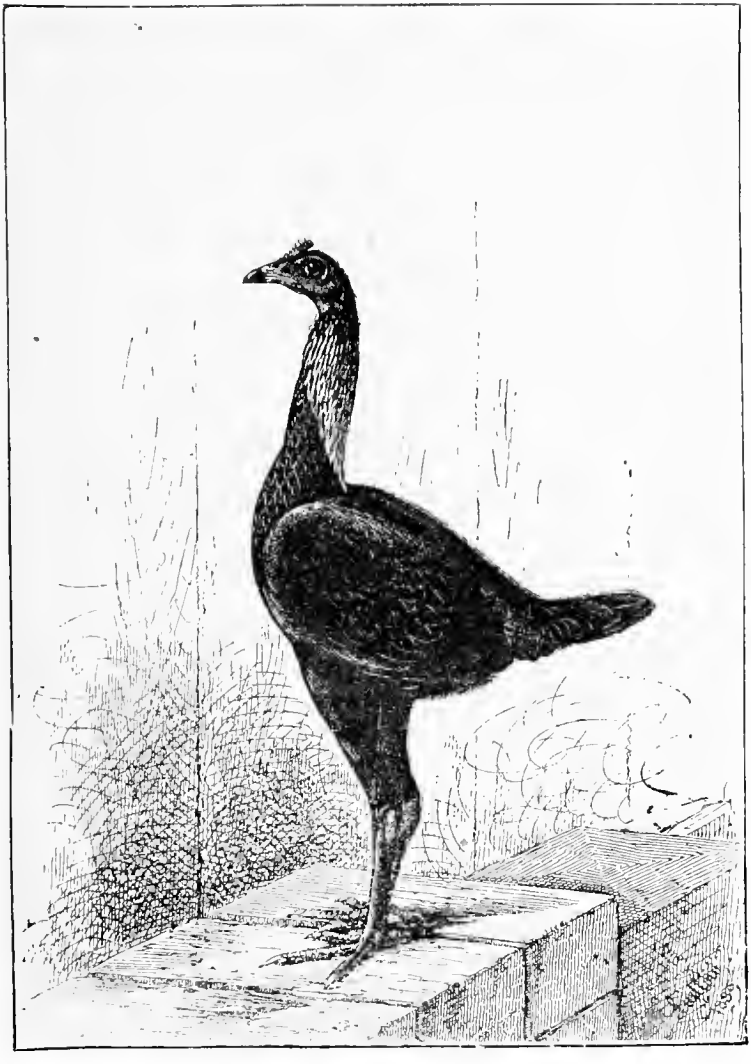
We will take the cock-breeding pen first. In choosing your male bird let him be an ideal exhibition specimen. Personally I much prefer the bright kind. See that his colour is sound, not only his top colour, but his breast a clear white, and his wing ends a rich chestnut right to the end of the feather. If the bays are washed out or weak, don't have him at any price—for cockerel breeding he would be dear as a gift. Remember always in your mating up that whatever faults your male bird may have in colour will crop up manifold in the greater part of the produce. Therefore be most exacting in your colour requirements, especially in the cock bird. If he is good in this respect, you can safely

use him, providing he has the necessary length of limb and body shape. In selecting his mates let them excel in *shape* and reach, and the more stylish and limby the better. They must be sound deep salmon in breast colour and well rosed with red on wings. You can't have too much colour on wing; such pullets, although useless as exhibition specimens, are invaluable as cockerel breeders. For cock breeding it is best where size and reach are required to use not more than four pullets to one cock or cockerel; three would be better. From such a pen you may reasonably expect some first-class exhibition cockerels. The pullets from this pen will also be very useful the following season for cockerel breeding, mated back to their father, and the best cockerel may be used with the hens. In this manner you are building up a reliable strain of your own, which is the secret of success in breeding high-class specimens, and is a very important requirement.

Another way to breed exhibition pile cockerels is to procure a sound coloured exhibition black-red cock and mate him to two or three pale-breasted pile pullets. In choosing a cock the most essential requirements are a sound black breast and sound, unbroken, deep chestnut bays, combined with a rich bright top colour. Some of the very best pile cocks that have ever graced the show pen have been bred in this manner. The only drawback is that the majority, if not all, of the pullets will come willow-legged. Years ago a good coloured pile with willow legs would find a place in the prize-lists, but those days are gone. Willow-legged specimens, no matter how good in other points, are discarded in the show pen of to-day.

It will invariably be found that these willow-legged pullets are better in shape, harder in feather, and sounder in colour than the yellow-legged ones. For this reason, I have found them very useful for pullet breeding when mated to a reliable pullet-breeding pile cock, especially so when the leg colour has shown a tendency to go pale in the piles the previous season. Therefore, although useless as show birds, they must not be treated as "wasters".

For pullet breeding a darker top-coloured bird is desirable—one of a red-brickish colour all through on top; but he, too, must be sound in his wing ends. It is best to procure one from a strain that has produced the best pullets at the principal shows. Pullet-breeding cocks are, of course, of little use for exhibition, consequently they can be bought much cheaper. Mate him to pullets or hens, from four to seven in number, perfectly clear on wing, and possessing good salmon-



BROWN-RED GAME PULLET.

coloured breasts. See that they are tall and excel in shape; the latter point is most important. The following season mate the best pullets back to their father and the hens back to the best cockerel.

If the space at your command will only allow of one pen being used, then select as highly a coloured cockerel as you can find that has been bred from a pullet-breeding pen, and mate him to a couple of rosy-winged pullets as described in cockerel breeding, and two clear-winged, good-breasted hens. You will then breed a few exhibition specimens of both sexes.

Now a little advice in mating up your birds:— Never use delicate birds or unhealthy specimens. The cock should never be over three or four years old, and never less than twelve months. From one to three years is the best, if you desire fertile eggs and vigorous chicks. Bear in mind that unhealthy stock birds will breed weakly chicks that will be an eyesore to you during the little time allotted to them in this world, and the sooner they depart the better for every one concerned. When the colour in your pile cocks appears to be getting paler and washed out as it were from breeding year after year from piles on both sides, the remedy will be found by introducing a good coloured black-red cock into your next season's cock-breeding pen, instead of using a pile cock. This cross also will always improve the leg colour when it has become pale through in-breeding.

In-breeding is all right when judiciously performed, but there is a happy medium beyond which if you proceed it will result in disaster, both from a colour point of view, and more especially in the health of your produce.

Duckwings.

Duckwings will now claim our attention. In my own estimation there is no more handsome bird in the whole poultry world than a sound-coloured golden duckwing cock.

Although not so difficult to breed to colour as the pile, yet he hardly secures the same favour as the latter in the Game Fancy. Still, a really first-rate duckwing can always hold his own in the show pen even when pitted against the more popular black-red, on account of the rich contrast in his colours. There are golden duckwings and silvers, the latter being serviceable only as stock birds in this country, but in America, Belgium and other countries both golds and silvers are catered for with separate classes in the show pen.

But here in England a silver duckwing has no earthly chance of success as an exhibition bird; still, as I shall point out later on, he is useful as a pullet breeder when properly mated. The day may come when silver duckwing Game, like the silver duckwing Leghorn, will find a place in the exhibition world.

I will now go on to describe the golden duckwing cock. In shape, size and general characteristics he must be the same as described for black-reds. He should have a red face and eye, although there is a great tendency for duckwings to run dark in eye. This, of course, is a fault, and should be guarded against when mating up your breeding pens. The neck hackle and saddle hackle should be a silvery white, as free from striping as possible. Saddle and wing bow a rich, deep orange, shaded with maroon, the richer and deeper the colour the better. The breast, wing butts, wing bar, and thighs should be a sound black, free from any lacing or ticking. The wing ends from the black wing bar to the end of the wing should be clear white, free from any chocolate colouring on the outer edge. It is in this point that quite a large percentage of duckwing cockerels fail, and the failure is somewhat difficult to overcome, and requires most careful attention when mating up. The tail of the duckwing should be identically the same as in the black-red.

The duckwing pullet, with the exception of colour, should resemble the black-red. The colour should be a nice light shade of steel grey, one even soft shade throughout, as finely pencilled as possible, although pullets bred from a cock-breeding pen will invariably fail in this respect, the coarse marking and blotchiness appearing on the top flight feathers of the wing, which also is a very great defect in the exhibition pullet. The legs should be willow, and as round and fine in bone as possible, flat shins being objectionable in all Game fowl. The breast colour should be the same as in the black-red, a medium shade of broken salmon. It is almost an impossibility to secure the deep salmon breast and the nice soft, even shade of steel grey body colour combined. Exhibition duckwing pullets have a great tendency to run pale in breast, and where the wing colour is particularly sound and free from any rust or coarse markings, some allowance should be made for a little paleness of breast colour. When I say a little pale I do not mean a regular washed-out breast colour, which we sometimes see heading the prize-list. This is wrong, as it is quite an easy matter to get a sound wing colour and a very pale breast, but quite another matter to combine a *fairly good* breast and sound wing colour.

And now to mating. It is much the best to have two pens —in fact, almost an absolute necessity.

For breeding the best-coloured duckwing cockerels, it is best to use a sound-coloured, black-red cock, one perfect in his black, and possessing a sound, rich, deep bay to end of wing. Of course, it is highly essential that he should be a typical Game bird in shape and reach as described in former chapters, with a straight breast-bone and sound feet.

To this bird I should mate two or three tall, broad-shouldered, duckwing pullets, as tall as possible, and preferring those clearest in neck hackles. If coarse in markings, and inclined to be a bit rusty on the wing, all the better for producing plenty of colour in your cockerels; but, above all, they must be tall and excel in shape.

From this pen you should breed some good-coloured, reachy cockerels, possessing all the requirements of a first-class exhibition bird. The pullets, however, from this pen would be mostly black-reds, and the few duckwing pullets that were produced would be faulty in colour from an exhibition point of view, but useful as cock breeders another year if mated to a rich, deep-coloured duckwing cockerel.

In pullet breeding I should go on quite contrary lines by using sound-coloured, shapely black-red pullets, mated to a silver duckwing cockerel. Not only would you breed good duckwing pullets in this manner, but in all probability you would also get a fair percentage of soft, even-coloured, black-red pullets, good enough to hold their own in the show pen; especially so if the black-red pullets you used in the breeding pen were pure pullet-bred black-reds. The most important point in this mating is to use only a silver duckwing cockerel that is pure duckwing bred on *both sides—i.e.*, bred from a duckwing cock out of a duckwing hen. Duckwing pullets can also be produced by using exhibition duckwing hens mated to a duckwing cock of the medium shade of colour, but the hens must be sound in colour and free from shaftiness—a very common fault in duckwings, and a fault which should by no means be overlooked in mating up your breeding pens.

The black-red pullets bred from a duckwing cross should never be used for breeding in the pure black-red breeding pens; from a colour point of view their produce would be worthless. Therefore, if the young fancier is breeding both duckwings and black-reds, the black-reds bred from duckwings should be marked as soon as hatched, and afterwards rung, to distinguish them from the pure-bred black-reds.

Birchens.

The birchens are closely related to the brown-reds, and were originally produced by crossing the silver duckwing cock with brown-red hens with a view of improving the colour of the brown-red cocks from a deep orange colour to the present day pale lemon. Birchens only differ from the brown-reds in top colour and lacing. In the former it should be a silvery white where the brown-red is lemon; in all other points they are precisely the same. Although a very handsome variety, the birchen finds few admirers, and very rarely are classes provided for them, with the exception of Birmingham, the Game show of the world.

Competing against piles and duckwings, they stand little chance of success in the prize list, and for this reason they have failed to find favour. Birchens breed more true to colour than either piles or duckwings, and good specimens of both sexes can be produced from one pen. The most difficult points to secure are a sound silvery white top colour in cocks, with a dark eye and a dark mulberry face combined. From a financial point of view I would not recommend any one to take up birchens, as prices for really first-class birds are by no means high.

Whites and Blacks.

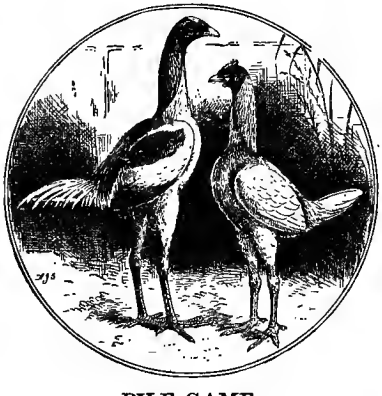
White Game are what their name denotes. Plumage pure white throughout both in cocks and hens, with rich yellow legs and beaks, and red eyes; in other points—viz., style, reach, shape and carriage—they must resemble first-class exhibition black-reds.

At the present time (1902) they are few and far between. During the past few years I have visited hundreds of shows and have not come across more than a dozen specimens at the most, and these were at Birmingham, the only show where classes are provided for whites and blacks.

Wales was at one time famous for its white Game, and I believe there are still a few bred somewhere in South Wales, but they are very rarely exhibited. Handsome as they are, they find few lovers, doubtless on account of the difficulty of keeping them clean, and are only suitable where they can have a good grass run away from the smoke of large towns. Where kept under favourable circumstances they are a very pretty variety, and look exceedingly nice on a good grass run,

and are by no means difficult to breed or rear, and, moreover, one pen only is required to produce good specimen of both sexes.

Blacks are still more scarce than whites, and are almost extinct. The colour should be a lustrous black throughout; legs and feet, dark bronze or black, the blacker the better; beak to match the legs; eyes dark brown, as dark as possible; face, comb and lobes, red. The only redeeming feature there seems to be about blacks is that they do not show the dirt, and therefore are suitable for confined runs in towns, where piles, birchens, or whites could not be kept; but apart from this, there is nothing to recommend them to the young fancier, as the small demand for this breed would not pay him for his trouble and outlay.



PILE GAME.

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COCK.

Head and Neck.—Head, long and snaky, narrow across the eyes; beak, strong at base, gracefully curved; eye, prominent, keen in expression; comb, earlobe and wattles, usually cut off; face, smooth skin without coarseness; neck, long and slightly arched, fine at setting on of head.

Body.—Short, wide in front, well tapered to stern; breast, broad; back, flat and shaped like a smoothing iron; wings, strong and powerful, short, well tucked up, shoulders prominent and carried well up.

Tail.—Short and fine, closely whipped together and carried slightly above level of body; sickles, fine and well pointed.

Legs and Feet.—Thighs, strong and muscular; shanks, long and nicely rounded; toes, long and straight.

General Shape and Carriage.—Upstanding and active. General appearance bold, fearless and smart.

Size and Weight.—From 7 lb. to 9 lb.

Plumage.—Short, hard and bright.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HEN.

Head and Neck.—Generally corresponding with cock; comb, very small and erect, nicely serrated; earlobe and wattles, small and fine texture.

Body.—Back, flat; rest of body corresponding with cock.

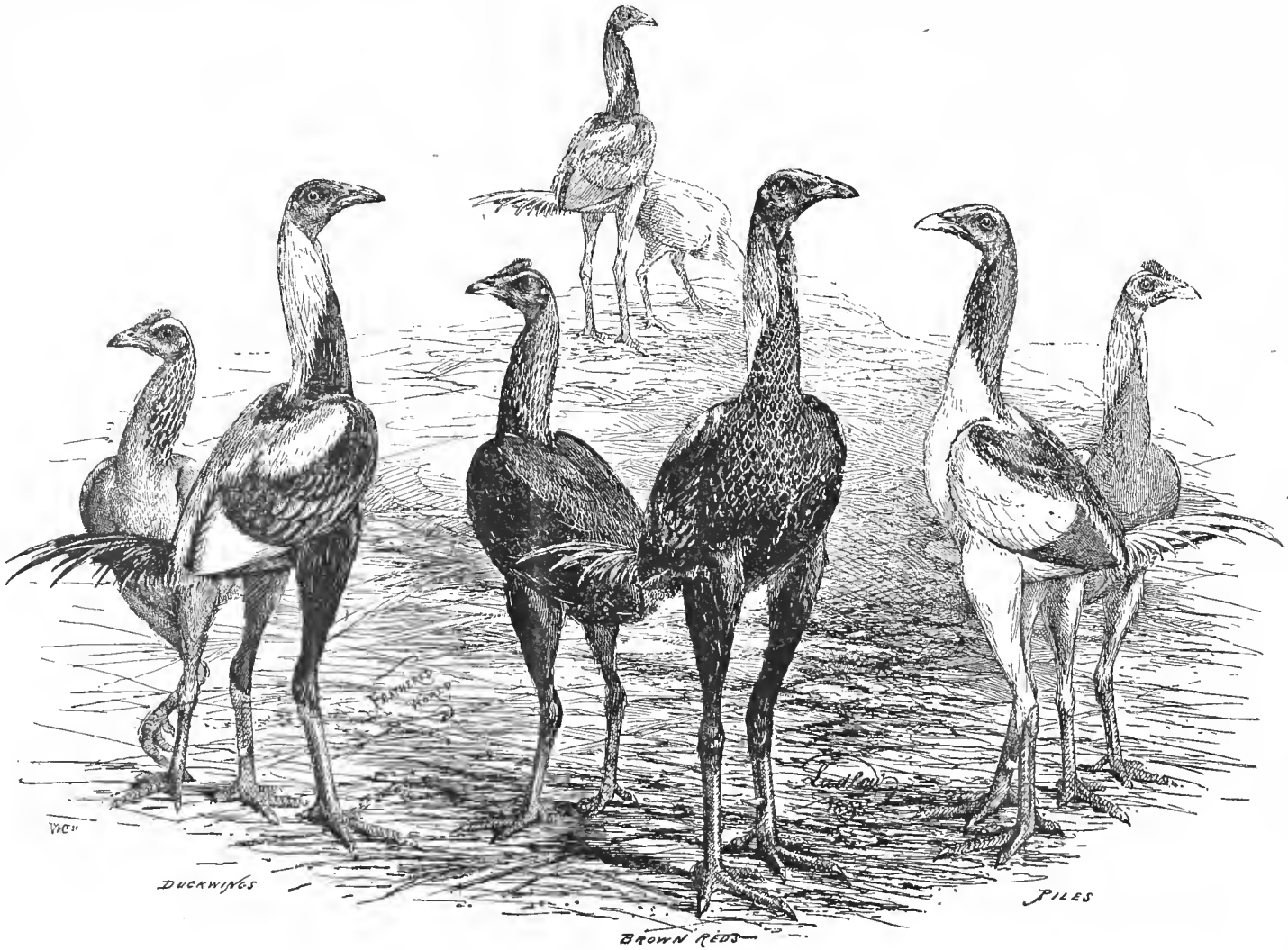
Tail.—Short and fine, closely whipped together and carried slightly above level of body.

Legs and Feet.—As in the cock.

General Shape and Carriage.—As in the cock.

Size and Weight.—From 5 lb. to 7 lb.

Plumage.—Short, hard and bright.



MODERN GAME.

Colour of Black-breasted Red Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, dark green horn; eye, bright red; comb, face and wattles, bright red; earlobe, bright red; legs, willow green.

In the Cock.—Head, orange red; hackle, light orange and free from black stripe; breast and thighs, greenish-black; back and saddle, rich crimson; wing-bow, orange; shoulders, black; wing-bars, green-black; secondaries, rich bay on the outer edge of feathers, on the inner edge and tips of bay black, only the rich bay showing when the wing is closed; primaries, black; tail, sickle feathers and tail coverts, green-black.

In the Hen.—Head, gold; hackle, gold slightly striped with black, running to clear gold on the top of the head; breast and thighs, breast a rich salmon, running to ashy colour on thighs. Rest of body, a light partridge brown with very small markings, and a slight golden tinge pervading the whole, which should be even throughout, free from any ruddiness whatever, with no trace of pencilling on the flight feathers; tail, black except the top feathers, which should match body colour.

Colour of Red Wheaten Game Hen.

Beak, greenish horn colour; eyes, ruby red; comb, lobes, face and wattles, red; legs, willow; plumage, head and hackle, golden or lemon, very slightly striped with black; breast and thighs, fawn or cream, diminishing to pale buff on thighs; body colour, pale cinnamon or wheaten; secondary flight feathers, pale cinnamon or wheaten; tail, black, except top feathers, which match body colour.

Colour of Silver Wheaten Game Hen.

Beak, light horn colour; eyes, ruby red; comb, lobes, face and wattles, red; legs, willow; plumage, head and neck hackle, silvery white, very slightly striped with black; breast and thighs, pale fawn, diminishing to light buff on thighs; body colour, very pale cinnamon; secondary flight feathers, very pale cinnamon; tail, black, except top feathers, which match body colour.

Colour of Brown-breasted Red-Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, very dark horn, black preferred; face, legs and tail, black; eye, jet black.

In the Cock.—Head, extra rich bright lemon; hackle, bright lemon, the centre of the feathers striped with glossy green-black colour, not brown; breast and thighs, brilliant glossy green-black, the breast feathers edged with round pale lemon lacing as low as the top of the thighs. Back and saddle, pure bright lemon; shoulders and wing-bows, points of shoulders very glossy green-black, free from ticks or lacing. Back of shoulder and wing-bow pure bright lemon to match back and saddle; wing-bars, rich glossy green-black; rest of body, very bright glossy green-black.

Note.—There should only be two colours in brown-red Game, *viz.*, lemon and black. The lemon colour in the cock should be very rich and bright; in the hen it should be a light lemon. The black in both sexes should be a very rich bright green-black called a beetle green.

In the Hen.—Head and neck hackle, pure bright lemon right to top of head, the lower feathers striped with glossy greenish-black colour; breast, laced same as cock well down to the thighs with light lemon-coloured lacing; rest of body and tail, rich beetle green-black, free from ticks on shoulders or lacing on back.

Colour of Pile Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, yellow; eye, bright cherry red; face, red; legs, rich orange yellow.

In the Cock.—Head, bright orange; neck hackle, bright orange colour (dark washy hackles are to be avoided); breast and thighs, pure white; back and saddle, rich maroon; saddle hackles, bright orange; shoulder butts, pure white; wing-bows, rich maroon; wing-bars, pure white, free from splashes; secondaries, dark chestnut on the outer edge of feathers, on the inner edge and tips of bay white, the dark chestnut only showing when the wing is closed; primaries, pure white; tail, sickle feathers and tail coverts, white.

In the Hen.—Neck hackle, white tinged with golden colour; breast, salmon colour; rest of body, pure white.

Colour of Golden Duckwing Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, dark horn colour; eye, ruby red; face, red; legs, willow.

In the Cock.—Head, creamy white; hackle, creamy white, free from striping; breast and thighs, blue-black; back and

saddle, pale orange on rich yellow; wing-bows, pale orange on rich yellow; wing-bars, black with blue sheen; secondaries, pure white on the outer edge of feathers, on the inner edge and tips of bay black, the pure white alone showing when the wing is closed; primaries, black; tail, sickle feathers and tail coverts, blue black.

In the Hen.—Head, silvery white; hackle, silvery white, finely streaked with black; breast and thighs, salmon colour, diminishing to ashy grey on thighs; rest of body, French or steel grey, very slightly pencilled with black and even throughout; tail, black except top feathers, which should match body colour.

Colour of Silver Duckwing Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, horn colour; eye, ruby red; face, red; legs, willow.

In the Cock.—Head, silvery white; breast and thighs, lustrous blue-black; hackle, silvery white; back and saddle, silvery white; shoulder coverts and wing-bows, silvery white; wing-bars, steel blue; secondaries, pure white on the outer edge of feathers, on the inner edge and tips of bay black, the pure white alone showing when the wing is closed; primaries, black; tail, sickle feathers and tail coverts, blue-black.

In the Hen.—Head, silvery white; hackle, silvery white, with very narrow black stripes; breast and thighs, breast a pale salmon, diminishing to a pale ashy grey on thighs; rest of body, light French grey, with nearly invisible black pencilling; tail, black, except top feathers, which should match body colour.

Colour of Birchen Game.

In both Sexes.—Beak, dark horn; eye, black; comb, face and wattles, dark purple; legs, black.

In the Cock.—Plumage, head, silvery white; hackle, silvery white, with narrow black striping; breast and thighs —breast a rich black with a narrow silvery margin round each feather, giving a beautiful laced appearance gradually diminishing to perfect black thighs; back and saddle, silvery white; shoulder coverts and wing-bows, silvery white; wing-bars, glossy black; secondaries, glossy black; tail, sickle feathers and tail coverts, black.

In the Hen.—Plumage, head and hackle, silvery white with very narrow black stripes; breast and thighs—breast

black, very delicately laced with white, diminishing to perfect black thighs: rest of body and tail, lustrous black.

Value of points in Game:—

Defects.	Deduct up to
Defects in head	5
,, neck	5
,, eye	10
,, tail	10
,, legs and feet	10
,, colour	20
Want of style and shape	30
Want of condition and shortness of feather	10
A perfect bird to count	100

Serious defects for which a bird should be passed:—Eyes other than standard; crooked breast-bone; twisted toes or duck feet; wry tail; crooked back; flat shins.

HATCHING AND REARING.

If I were asked which breed of large fowl were the most difficult to rear, I should unhesitatingly reply Modern Game. Doubtless many of my readers will remark, "Why is this?" The chief reason is not far to seek, *viz.*, "In-breeding".

The present-day Modern Game fowl has been so inbred to obtain the desired colour and fine bone, and bred so very tall, that the constitution and stamina of the bird has been so enfeebled as to make the chicks most difficult to rear, except where every care and attention can be given to them by an expert. Chicks bred from birds kept especially for stock purposes are much easier to rear than those bred from exhibition birds that have been doing the rounds of shows the previous season. Therefore I always advise young fanciers to breed from stock that are healthy and vigorous, and not from worn-out exhibition specimens which are worthless as breeders.

Do not try and hatch your Game chicks in incubators and then rear them in an artificial rearer. You may rear Rocks, Orpingtons and the like in this manner, but pure-bred exhibition Game, *never*. They require a natural mother, and a good one to boot—nothing beats the Wyandotte-Silkie cross. Mate two or three silver or gold 'Dotte hens to a Silkie cock, and the pullets from this cross can be relied upon at all times, and will cover nine or ten Game eggs nicely; and, moreover, will be broody by the time your first batch of eggs are ready to put down—instead of having to tramp the country round in search of a "clocking" hen, which, when you have found her and taken her home, very probably will prefer to stand on the eggs rather than sit.

Having got your eggs and your broody hen ready, proceed to make the nest. Nothing beats the old-time orange box, which can be bought for 2d. or 3d. Place the box on its side with a strip of board about 3 or 4 inches deep at the bottom to hold the nest material, and to keep the eggs from

rolling out. Next put in a good supply of sand or fine soil, make the soil hollow in the centre, and heaped round the sides of the box, then put in plenty of nice soft hay, making it the shape of a basin.

Before putting the hen on—which is best done at even-time, when it is getting dusk—examine the hen for lice; if she has any, give her a good dusting with insect powder; also sprinkle some on the nest before putting in the eggs. Take the hen off each evening, and give her a feed of maize, and water to drink. Do not allow her to go on until the wants of nature have been attended to, or she will foul the nest. At the end of the sixth day, examine the eggs by candlelight, as by that time the clear or unfertile eggs can easily be detected simply by holding the egg between the thumb of each hand, and turning the egg slowly round, when the fertile eggs will show a dark shadow in the centre, whilst unfertiles will be quite clear. These can be taken out to make more room for the fertile ones.

When possible it is best to set two hens at the same time, then if there are many clear eggs, all the fertile ones can be given to one hen, and a fresh lot of eggs to the other; by doing this, you will ensure good broods. If any of the eggs remain unhatched at the end of the 21st day, it is best to get a basin of luke-warm water and put the eggs into the water, and if the chick is alive the egg will bob about, generally within the space of a minute or two at the most. If they remain stationary, you can be sure the chick is dead.

In very dry hot weather it is a good plan to take out the eggs and damp the nest well with milk and warm water a few days before hatching, repeating every alternate day.

Just before the hen is due to hatch, examine her again carefully for lice, and sprinkle her well with the insect powder. More deaths are caused through lice on chicks than all the diseases put together, therefore you cannot be too careful in this matter. Cleanliness is the certain road to success in chicken rearing, so don't you forget it. Always provide a good dust bath for your sitting hen, composed of dry ashes with an addition of a little sulphur.

After the chicks are hatched, take the hen and chicks and place them in a coop with a boarded floor covered with nice clean dry sand; let her remain perfectly quiet for a few hours, as chicks do not require any food for at least twelve hours after hatching.

Feeding Game Chickens.

The first feed should consist of hard boiled egg chopped fine, and mixed with stale bread crumbs. This should be given to them every two hours the first day.

The next day or two feed them on Game Meal mixed with boiling water and allowed to cool. Give them this for the first week, varying the feed once or twice a day with bread soaked in sweet milk, and, for a change, once a day rice boiled for fifteen minutes, and after it has had the water taken from it and allowed to cool, rub it through fine oatmeal until dry. These two last feeds will greatly assist in preventing diarrhœa. After the first week the feeding can be reduced to every two-and-a-half hours. To the meal add half the same quantity of Indian meal, and a handful of meal greaves or crissel, and scald both together; stir well together, and allow to stand a little while, and then add a handful or two of oatmeal and fine sharps, or what is termed thirds flour: this makes a capital staple soft food for Game chicks after the first week until they are matured. At the end of a month the feeding can be regulated to four times daily; the feed at night being wheat, which must be sound and sweet.

And now for the water question. Where the chicks have free range on grass runs, do not give them any water at all; they will thrive all the better without it. The majority of our big successful breeders never give their chicks water, consequently diarrhœa is almost unknown. Give them plenty of water and allow it to be exposed to the sun in warm weather, then your troubles begin and your chicks will die off by the score. Never give them water, and they will never require it. Of course the hen will require water; this can be done by fastening a small tin inside the coop about eight inches from the ground. When you give your chicks their first feed in the morning do not forget to feed the hen at the same time; give her a good feed of maize then, it will satisfy her for the day, otherwise she will eat up the food intended for the chicks.

When the hen leaves the chicks, which is generally at the age of from two to three months, the cockerels should be separated from the pullets, and placed in a separate run; by doing this the chicks will thrive much better. Any deformed or mismarked ones should be killed at this age to make more room for the good ones.

DISEASES.

We now enter upon the concluding chapter of our work by a brief reference to the diseases to which Game fowl are liable.

Old English Game, being of a more robust constitution than Modern Game, rarely suffer much sickness. They are altogether stronger, and more capable of withstanding the cold and damp than Modern Game, the stamina of which, through in-breeding, has been greatly weakened.

The most common of all ailments to which exhibition Game are subject is Cold or Catarrh. The chief symptoms are a watery discharge from the eyes and nostrils, accompanied by feverishness, and if neglected in its early stages will develop into roup. As soon as the symptoms have been noticed, the patient should be isolated at once, and penned in a well-ventilated house free from draughts. The eyes and nostrils should be bathed night and morning with warm water to which has been added a few drops of permanganate of potash or Condy's Fluid. Should the nostrils be full of sticky mucus, this should be pressed out with the forefinger and thumb; afterwards the mouth should be washed out as before, using a piece of linen rag, which should always be burned after each operation to prevent the spread of the disease. Give the bird a teaspoonful of salad oil each morning half-an-hour before feeding, and again at bedtime, but never when the crop is full of food.

The morning food should consist of bread soaked in cold water; then squeeze out the water and add a little warm milk. At night give good, sound, dry English wheat, but feed sparingly. The drinking water should have a small piece of sulphate of iron about the size of a small bean to a pint of water, but only allow the bird to drink twice a day after food. Keep the bird supplied with both green food and grit, with a little lean meat, cut fine, every alternate day.

Diphtheritic Roup or Diphtheria.—This loathsome disease is the most contagious to which the feathered tribe is liable, as well as the most fatal. I have known it

to go through the entire flock, causing a loss in some cases of two or three hundred pounds. The symptoms are a whitish film or membrane in the inside of the mouth, which gradually thickens until it becomes of a cheesy nature, and spreads down to the windpipe. When this stage is reached, the bird has a catchy cough, also arching and twisting its neck in a peculiar manner, and unable to swallow its corn. If the growth is not immediately removed the bird is suffocated. Besides the growth in the mouth, wart-like spots will appear on the face and round the eyelids to such an extent that the bird goes completely blind. These ulcers or sores like warts may appear on the face and at the same time the mouth be perfectly free.

In the first place, the bird should be isolated immediately the disease is noticed, and the house thoroughly disinfected and lime-washed, adding a little carbolic oil to the lime-wash. The drinking vessels should be scalded with boiling water, adding a little Jeyes' Fluid to the water, and allow them to remain in the water for some minutes.

The mouth and spots on the face and comb should be painted with the following lotion, which can be obtained at any chemist's:—

Carbolic acid	1 drachm
Sulphurous acid solution	3 drachms
Tincture perchloride of iron	4 drachms
Glycerine	4 drachms

using a camel-hair brush.

The cheesy matter should first of all be removed, using a piece of sharp wood and burning the wood as soon as you have finished. Then paint the places carefully morning and night. It is not necessary to remove the growth every day —only when it appears ripe.

In addition to this treatment make a few pills of lard and flour of sulphur—equal parts—and give one the size of a small marble each morning for a week.

The hands should be well washed and disinfected after each operation, as the disease is highly contagious, and the clothes should be changed before going amongst the other birds which are not affected. I have known people carry the disease in their clothes for miles, even though they had not handled the birds.

If the first bird affected is not a very valuable one, the best plan would be to kill it and burn the body. By doing this you would in all probability prevent the spread of the disease, if the place be at once thoroughly disinfected. I

have found Krekodyne vinegar added to the drinking water a capital preventive of the spread of this disease.

Bronchitis.—Symptoms: quick breathing and coughing, with frothy discharge from the mouth and nostrils. It generally comes on very suddenly if the bird has been exposed to a draught or severe change of the weather. The patient should be kept in a warm room, and allowed to inhale steam from boiling water into which has been added a few drops of terebene. Repeat the treatment every two hours until the breathing is easier. Feed the bird on warm bread and milk.

Liver Disease is one of the most prevalent of diseases to which Game fowl, through in-breeding, are liable. The symptoms are sluggishness, little or no appetite. When once this disease has got a firm hold it is almost impossible to cure it, but by judicious feeding, and an occasional dose of salts or fluid magnesia, the disease may be kept in check. Green food is a necessity, and the morning feed should be bread soaked in water, or a little oatmeal porridge. Maize should on no account be given. In severe cases the bird may go lame.

Inflammation of the Liver is more acute, and it is rarely the patient recovers. The causes may be through wrong feeding or the result of a chill. There is much more pain, and the bird will appear to be unable to move about; very often there is lameness. A steam bath, by holding the patient over boiling water every two hours, will relieve the pain and inflammation; give ten drops of chlorodyne every four hours for three or four days. After the bird has got a turn for the better, feed on bread and milk in the morning, a little lean meat chopped fine with boiled cabbage at noon, and sound corn at night, with a little iron in the water as a tonic.

Pneumonia, or Inflammation of the Lungs.—The symptoms are very similar to bronchitis: difficult breathing, panting and coughing. The bird must be kept very warm, and fed on warm bread and milk only; a little liniment or turpentine rubbed well between the shoulders. Give the bird three drops of ipecacuanha wine in a teaspoonful of water every hour until relieved. If the patient cannot eat, beat up a raw egg and add a little brandy; give this by using a small syringe, which can be purchased from any chemist for a shilling.

Leg Weakness generally affects the Modern Game cockerels more than pullets, and is said to be caused by too much uric acid in the blood; that is to say—is of the nature of rheumatism. I am inclined to think it is simply the bird

overgrowing its strength, and, being long in limb, the weight of the body causes the legs to give way. One of the finest remedies I know of is a teaspoonful of Easton's Syrup in the bird's soft food in the morning, and the same quantity in half a pint of drinking water. Another remedy is to make thirty pills from the following, and give one two or three times a day: Strychnine, 1 grain; citrate of iron, 1 drachm; phosphate of lime, 1 drachm; quinine disulphate, 15 grains. A useful preventive is a little bone meal in the soft food.

Bumble-Foot.—This particularly attacks Dorkings and heavy breeds in general, but is sometimes found also in Game. The causes may be cuts from glass or pricks from thorns, when the formation is purely a common abscess. Corns will develop into abscesses. This is probably true bumble-foot. Flying down from high perches on to the hard ground, or any other action by which the foot is suddenly strained, may tear the corn until it festers, and must then be removed by cutting it away in one piece. If it is a soft abscess, make an incision and squeeze out the matter. Wash well with hot water, using plenty of soap; afterwards pour a few drops of Condy's Fluid into the incision, then bind up the foot with a piece of rag which has been smeared with carbolised vaseline.

Scaly Leg.—Purely and simply a parasite growing under the scales of the leg. Wash the legs thoroughly in hot water, as hot as you can bear your hand in; let the legs remain in the water until well soaked; then take an ordinary nail-brush and soap, and scrub well under the scales. If the disease is very bad it is best to apply pure paraffin to the legs a day or two before you wash them. After you have given them a good washing, dry thoroughly, and apply a little ointment made of equal parts of sulphur and vaseline. Repeat the dressing after an interval of three days. Scaly leg is by no means a formidable thing. It is very often contracted from the sitting hen when the chicks are very young. It should, however, be attended to as soon as discovered, otherwise it eats into the leg in time, and, when cleared off, leaves it pretty much as rust that has been long neglected would leave a piece of old iron.

Crop-bound is caused by the bird picking up portions of grass, hay, straw and similar material, which do not digest, but form into a hard ball in the crop. If taken in time, before it sets very firmly, the crop may be partially filled with warm water and the offensive matter kneaded to a pasty state. If the fowl be then inverted, the whole contents of the crop may be ejected by squeezing it out through the mouth. If this

method fails, make an incision from the outside. Choose a place as free from veins as possible, then make a cut 1½ inch long, cutting the top skin and the under-skin together; by inserting the forefinger, the contents can easily be removed, taking care to get it thoroughly empty. The edges of the wound should then be washed with warm water to which a little Condy's Fluid has been added; then take a fine needle and some white silk thread and stitch the edges of the under-skin first, then the outer skin. Do not give the bird any water for a day or so; feed only on bread soaked in milk for a few days, until the wound has healed.

A GAME CONTEST IN MODERN TIMES.
(Sketched at Birmingham Show, 1902.)

A GAME CONTEST IN 1814.

THE

COCKER;

CONTAINING

Every Information to the Breeders and Amateurs

OF THAT NOBLE BIRD,

The Game Cock:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A VARIETY OF OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

FOR

The Instruction

OF

THOSE WHO ARE ATTENDANTS ON THE

COCK PIT.

By W. SKETCHLEY, Gent.

Burton-on-Trent:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. CROFT, HIGH STREET; AND SOLD BY LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN.

London.

1814.

PREFACE.

THE author having been attached to the sod at a very early period of life—and having lived in a part of the country high in repute for that noble bird, the Game Cock; where as great a variety of birds were exhibited in all their various process of refinement as any individual amateur could enjoy, he flatters himself that by such superior means of collecting information his attempt at writing "The Cocker" will be found to contain not only instruction, but be a source of amusement to the reader, and as such may serve to plead his apology for undertaking the present task.

Under such a pre-eminent latitude of superior breed, no man of discernment could be at a loss (to mark those whose superiority of blood, mode of fighting, with all the necessary concomitants that constitute perfection in the game cock) how much to appreciate their worth.

To collect a stud from these renowned war-

riors was the pleasing task of the author, whose situation in life enabled him to obtain the object of his pursuit. But our juvenile endeavours are not always adequate to the difficulties attendant on true breeding; for notwithstanding the judicious choice of cocks so made, we are liable to fail from some incompatible choice of our ideas. To unite their crosses, (in order to complete a uniform set of birds,) similarity of feather, constitution, colour of the beak and legs, are in themselves so requisite, that for the want of a monitor in our early progress we too precipitately anticipate all we want in procuring these models of perfection, when, in fact, we have perhaps accomplished very little essential to the constituent part of breeding. The author trusts that an extensive routine of practice for fifty years, aided by the acute observations of others, and committing to paper from time to time those of his own, has enabled him to afford such information as may pilot the juvenile breeder through so pleasing, yet so arduous an undertaking; knowing well that observations founded upon experience, are the surest guide to truth in every science, and are more likely to succeed than the most refined and plausible theories.

March 30*th*, 1814.

THE COCKER.

To Breeders.

In our early attachment to, and pursuit after, cocking, and on our commencement of breeding, we are frequently hurried on in our choice of a single cock from a day's fight, or a promiscuous match, that has exhibited appearances of courage and heel. Although condition will not give heel, yet it very much promotes courage, inasmuch as to carry an indifferently-bred cock through a tolerably well contested battle.

From these superficial trials and our own want of experience we are induced to purchase cocks of this description to breed from, which must inevitably involve us in error. But maturer experience will inform us, that high condition will incite courage in a half-bred cock: and a bloody heeler in that situation may succeed against one of superior game and less heel. It therefore shews how necessary it is to guard against a prepossession of any single cock however meritorious.

To avoid this youthful partiality, if you attend regular mains, you will have an opportunity of seeing a number of well-bred brothers, whose mode of fighting and supporting their battles in any stage, mark them for steady fighters, good heelers, ready mouths, and deep game. Such proofs would warrant your endeavours to procure one of these warriors the least injured in his contest, more immediately if their feathers and other concomitants are to your wish. Practice and acute observation will tend to inform you what feathered birds are the most approved, as well as the best in constitution. But of those endowed with every sought-for requisite, the black-reds are most in estimation. The difficulties attendant on our

early endeavours are only to be surmounted by a steady attention to those particulars that are requisite in this pursuit; and when you have fixed on such cocks, whose originality is well known, and whose breed has stood the test of experience, it will not be difficult to procure such, either by interest or connexion. If hens or pullets cannot be obtained (which should if practicable) you must be equally cautious in selecting them from other sorts similar in feather, constitution, and every other attendant. Having once arranged your brood conform, to your directions: and at a proper season you may commence

Breeding.

Gentlemen who have been in the habit of breeding, may have, from keeping the old brood too long together, brought their cocks to a stand still; when by a judicious mode of keeping in and in, that circumstance might not have taken place. It is generally admitted, that a cock is in full prime and vigour at two years old. But how frequently we find that cocks are continued with hens until they are six or seven years old. At three years old it is well known that he begins to lose that sprightly bloom he wears at two; his length of plume increases, and his hack exhibits too loose a texture, dangling over his throat. When this is discerned, we ought to substitute another in his stead; for he will become inactive, languid, and balk his craving partners—and you may breed in vain. The hens may in general be held to a longer date, as they retain the power to propagate beyond the period allotted to the cock. If this opinion is granted, the impropriety of continuing them beyond that period may account for the slow and inactive cocks so frequently met with.

To elucidate the foregoing remarks, in order to enable you to judge of the constitution of the brood-cock you mean to select, he should have every apparent feature of health: such as a ruddy complexion—his feathers close and short—not cold or dry—fresh firm and compact—full breasted, yet taper and thin behind—full in the girth—well coupled—lofty and spiring—a good thigh—the beam of his leg very strong—a quick large eye—strong beak, curved and big at setting on—not more than two years old, put to early pullets, or a blooming stag with two-year-old hens—and when a cock, with pullets of his

own getting. Great experience justifies me in vouching for the prosperity of the practice. In order that you may attain a sufficient number of in and in for your establishment hereafter, March, April, May, and June, if they have been early together, are the months to propagate: the latter month will not be too late for two-year-old cocks. For the two first days of a long main very early chickens have their inconveniences; and if you have none at hand till April they will probably be esteemed sufficiently early, as the springs are not so congenial for breeding as formerly.

In the choice of your hens let them be rightly plumed to your cock; nor let your choice fall upon those that are large but rather suffer the cock to make up deficiency in the hens being small: their shape should be similar to the cock—lofty necks,—short and close feathered. A true blood hen is seldom or never gummy in the bone of her leg, but clean, sinewy, and, in length, proportionate to the rest of the body, with a well-set thigh, long, clean, and taper toes, so that they may, as far as is practicable, be as near in every respect to your original brood, as the nature of breeding will admit of. Deviation will take place in feather, &c. instances of which have frequently occurred with me, where Dame Nature has interfered in her varying change: that notwithstanding every well adapted system, she will prevail in surprising us with some productive alteration which inexperience is at a loss to account for. Fifteen years or more I had enjoyed an invariable production of the most complete black-reds bred by any amateur, without a single instance of deviation during that period, but on the sixteenth year I had several light Piles in one hatch;—no change of eggs could possibly take place—or was there a shadow of doubt of interference with any other cock, but a strong recurrence to the Pile at that distant period. A well regulated account of my cocks enabled me to ascertain that there had been a Pile in the cross five years previous to my having them out of Shropshire: so that they held highly regular for twenty-one years, not only in plumage but in every desired requisite. To have gone on with this deviation would in the end have produced Spangles, &c. Of course the pullets were cast aside, and the cocks fought off. By a persevering conduct in selecting the darkest, or those most resembling your original attachment, is the surest criterion you can possibly pursue in keeping up, not only their feather, but constitution.

Let then no recommendation, however high, induce you to breed from cock or hen (when you find it necessary to make a cross) either with one or the other, that differs essentially from your old brood; for notwithstanding every judicious caution in the selection of that choice, the introduction of a new cross (though every way similar) may prove more injurious than the evil you are endeavouring to correct; therefore in this case your inquiries and ocular demonstration should be your peculiar care.

Your brood now selected under every due consideration, I should recommend from four to six pullets or hens, being as great a number as should be put to a cock, (probably only four hens to a stag) and should always prefer a maiden cock to a fought one, of the same sort; the former suffers no inconvenience in being fed and tendered by hot meals, close covering, clipping, ruffled temper, loss of blood, and receiving unknown injuries,—whereby the intention of breeding may be materially frustrated. On the contrary, they are endowed with nature's best gifts, and of course best calculated to answer the desired end. I should advise their being put together as early as November or December, that the cock may be perfectly at ease on his walk, and have ample time for ingratiating himself with his new acquaintances. Every Gentleman has an opportunity of selecting proper places for breeding, where they can experience as little interruption by dogs and vermin, as possible. The distance from any other house where fowls are kept should be at least half a mile—the situation, a dry gravelly soil; and it would be better if they could enjoy a constant spring of clear water, and shade, the nearer your brood-place the better. A situation where cocks are liable to interfere with your hens has too frequently occasioned the failure of supposed brothers in the same hatch, and has been the cause of greater derangements in the course of breeding than any other circumstance whatever. Another necessary caution is, not to suffer any hens different in breed to be turned down with any set of sisters; for notwithstanding every caution in selecting eggs, you may be deceived, or held dubious, and ruin every well projected plan. Have a marked attention to see that your brood cock bears himself well to all his hens. It frequently happens that one or more labours under his displeasure, an antipathy we are yet at a loss to account for; in that case they become useless and should be removed. If his gene-

conduct be severe, I should suspect him of cowardice, for several cocks of this description in the course of my breeding have turned out but indifferent. You will find that those hens under this plumed bashaw's arrogant dislike are generally held at an awful distance, and are seldom or never attendant upon him, but are recluse and solitary. This may account for the many unprolific eggs in extensive breeding. Whenever you have occasion to remove any, be the cause what it will, do not disturb the repose of the rest by turning down a fresh hen; for by such a change I have been deprived of the use of the whole for that season, nor should it be practised at any brood department or elsewhere where valuable hens are, without observing their conduct towards each other. Such has been the conflict upon those occasions, that they have never recovered their usual gaiety and constitution, but gradually pined away.

The saving of eggs too early, which you intend to set, from hens that have not been with your brood cock from the beginning, has occasioned such errors as time alone can correct; and although even a few may only partake of the prolific stamp of another cock, those few may be productive of incalculable mischief, and engraft a blood so every way different from your own (the cause too frequently observed) that in the course of fighting, you have good and bad cocks supposed to be equally bred alike, and you are embarrassed to know how to remedy the evil. This circumstance and another equally if not more dangerous (the unwarrantable practice of changing the eggs) every Fancier who has been in the habit of long breeding, has experienced. To obviate such errors, so as not to admit of a doubt, (at least as far as human foresight can insure us) have them so early together as may in that respect totally exclude the idea:—even with this precaution, I would not save the few first eggs, nor the last.

It is not in the compass of practice to avoid the every particular inconvenience that arises in breeding, or I could wish that every hen could lay distinctly—that the eggs might be marked differently, and of course hatched under separate hens: for every sister may not enjoy an equal share of good health. In this particular, how requisite it is, that the person employed or engaged in the pursuit should have a knowledge of those deviations of health to which these birds are subject in order that they may be detected as early as possible. It does not always fall to the lot of those whose province it is to superin-

tend them, to discriminate to that extent: but the many inconveniences and errors attendant on this pursuit, should point out the necessity of their being possessed of such qualifications. A single day should not pass without seeing the general brood, and the utmost attention paid to every minutiæ to prevent the errors committed by neglect; and more particularly so, when we experience some default, notwithstanding our utmost care, for it certainly behoves us to exert our best endeavours to bring them into the hands of the feeder, in whom we confide, as unexceptionable as possible.

'Tis doubtless an absurd opinion to think any breed incestuous that springs from the brute creation, and of course we have bred from father and daughter, mother and son, or from brother and sister, which is termed full blood. I have also known the brood excellent where the brood-cock and hens are got by the same cock, but out of a different hen. Though I most approve of the former, the hen's strain being generally allowed to be superior and more certain than the cock's. If your brood places are at a distance from your house or place where you mean your old game hens to sit, great care should be taken that your eggs in being conveyed away are not cracked or shaked, but compact and firm for carriage. As eggs are best marked when gathered, always on these occasions provide yourself with pen and red ink, and mark each egg with some character known to yourself with the day of the month; for, as you may not always have broody hens ready, this method will point out to you to set or destroy them according to the time they may have been on hand. I have generally kept mine in sweet bran: their own weight imbeds them and prevents their contact: cause them to be turned every two days—for by lying too long in one position the yolks will frequently decay, and destroy the prolific power. It frequently happens that some eggs are smaller than others, and ill-formed—they therefore should be rejected; for all misshaped eggs will produce defective birds. From intense observation I have generally found that the round egg produced the female, and those of the oblong the male bird. If too many eggs are set under the hen so as to be exposed to the chilling cold or to intense heat, either extreme impairs the vital power, and the embryo will prove deficient. Nature prompts these creatures to turn their eggs during incubation; equally necessary is its being done previous to their being set.

A few years will provide you with a sufficient number of old game hens to sit, and on no account be prevailed on to use any other. Old hens are always more steady in sitting than pullets, are more industrious and attached to their brood, and not half so prone to quit their brood at too early a period. Their places for sitting should be private, free from annoyance, and ought to be as little ruffled as possible, save more immediately to see that they are not laid to, as well as to observe that she has not deserted them:—to give them every chance of secure retirement, they should be little liable to intrusion. It has been recommended to supply them with food, &c. near them. Whatever is most natural I should think most conducive to their health, and therefore have suffered them to come off to enjoy good water with feed at a certain place, that they may not be too long absent from their eggs, with any other enjoyment they are in search after.

It is a good and regular method to chalk over the place where they sit the day they should hatch, and of course draw your attention to see that the eggs are perfectly right as to number, mark, &c.—and to remove the chipped envelope, as well as the chickens which are hatched, until the whole are at hand. You will then return them to the hen in such place as you may have for the purpose (boarded floors are best) where they remain as to time according to the clemency of the season, and the strength of the chickens. Let their feed be

Macerated eggs that have been boiled hard;
Crumbs of white bread;
Lettuce leaves, well mixed with an addition of meadow ants;
The maggots from grains, kept for the purpose;
Shilled steeped oats;
Small wheat;
Curds, with new milk;
Bread toasted, steeped in chamber-lie,

as they are fond of variety. Let their food be given frequently, in small quantities, and accommodate them with small heaps of dry earth or fine sand in the room.

You will observe never to carry them abroad until the dew is entirely off the grass, every kind of humidity being hurtful; and you will return them before sunset.

As more hatches than one may be in the same place, never delay marking them when brought into the room with some one of the marks usually put upon them (perhaps those upon the nostril and eye are the most injurious) in order to discriminate their sorts as well as to enter them in the manner set forth in the book for the purpose previous to your leaving the room. If you have plenty of range in your department, a great many chickens may be kept until such time as the hens may leave them. A distribution of your cockerils claims your serious attention, so much so that one half of your early birds may be preserved until such time as they are to occupy their allotted walks. The mode I have pursued to accomplish this desired end is, to select as many early cockerils, as nearly of an age as they present themselves, and turn them down in some secure retreat, under the guidance and authority of a two-year-old cock, with one hen. Here they may remain without a probability of their becoming rebellious or self-contentious until November, when it may be right to do away the old cock and his mate, and suffer them to enjoy an uncontrolled retirement until a proper disposal offers. No other mode that I could possibly devise has offered me so much security as this, and what I should strongly recommend. Others you may dispose of in such farm-yards, where interest is most predominant, and there remain a proper season until their removal. Frequent visits are in this department necessary to watch their growth and well-doing—and at a proper time to make choice of those whose shape and perfection promise to reward your future care. Those that are not the objects of your choice, see them properly disposed of, in order to prevent an improper use.

Previous to their going to master-walks have them up for twelve or fourteen days, that you may cut their comb and wattles; and handle them with gentleness and every encouraging demeanour. Let them go proudly out of hand, and touch them lightly behind to bring them to the front of the pen: this will feed their pride, inure them to the crow of others, and they come to with more alacrity and pleasantness to be fed and with more facility than cocks unaccustomed

thereto; and from this necessary attention few or any are liable to shy.

Let your pens be well aired, the fastnesses properly secured, the perches arranged, the straw sweet and not damp, and every morning shook from their filth. Before you send them out number your pens from number one to the number you have up, with the person's name they are to go to; and having your book ready enter them as directed, being particular as to their marks and colours, with any other natural mark they may have, and ticket your bags according to the pens, when sent. A regularity of this kind will save much trouble.

Your utmost care and attention must be exerted to procure good walks, for half-bred fowls in a well furnished walk will beat the best game when starved or pined; and hand-strewed walks generally bring on an inactive sloth. To send fine stags that have enjoyed every indulgence to bad walks, is one of the most flagrant errors a breeder can commit, and it is undoing all you have done before. Cocks, from so sudden a deviation, experience a change in their system, and it checks their growth—frequently a gradual decline ensues. Therefore the procuring good walks is absolutely necessary and conducive to the well-doing and constitution of your cocks. All town-walks, except here and there a few, are not worth having, and there are few in villages where towns are near to each other, but may be ranked in the same class. The best are those whose situations are distant, and where plenty of corn and water abound. Grass walks with corn are to be preferred to clay-bound fields, the latter defacing their glossy plumes. Where a great number of walks are wanted, the practice of running stags with cocks is unavoidable, and with some to a late period; even if he fights a long main early in the spring he may fall short of the whole of his stags being got out, and of course a many are sacrificed. If you have much yard-room, or two yards belonging the same dwelling, let the younger brood be accustomed to occupy the one, with a proper roost distinct from the other, seldom interfering with the older branch. Gentlemen who command any number of walks, have infinitely the advantage of those whose walks are few and limited: the advantages over the latter are pre-eminently great, for many are so beauitfully situated that even the crow or the sight of a cock seldom come across them; they are neither fretted nor teazed, which ever causes them to lose much of

their flesh, and destroys that martial fire and spirit, when so habituated, added to the annoyance of stags—that when exhibited upon the Pit, his raging pride is so far abated, it frequently makes him tardy and slow to action.

Those who fight for considerable sums cannot be too scrutinizing in the choice of their stags, when they are to be sent out to clear walks, to see that they are in all respects free from ocular imperfections; for the occupying walks with any deficit is not only an increase of expense, but a great disappointment, as it frequently happens for want of such nice observation, that they are reckoning upon more fine cocks than they are possessed of.

To mention a few of these imperfections may be necessary, although they are generally well known; such as are

Flat sided, and then generally deep heeled,
Short legged,
Thin thighs,
Crooked or indented breast,
Short thin neck,
Imperfect eye,
Duck and short footed, and
Unhealthful,

may be easily seen when up for the purpose of cutting and handling.

Cocks that are well formed and lofty have an amazing advantage over the disproportioned; the latter carrying with them much useless weight. High bearing fowls will always have the odds in their favour over low setting cocks. Cocks when they are justly formed, rise in their fight with more agility and force, are better heelers than those that carry their make equal to the extreme; and your dry heeled cocks are generally of the latter description, the weight being too far from the centre of action, and once overpowered they are always under a cock, that is not alike defective;—their legs are thrown out of the line of the body, and of course are never close hitters.

Cocks that do not bear cone-like shapes, are for the most part wide and straddling in their walk, and as they walk they fly—whereas in the cone-like shape the legs are more inverted and narrow, and are more terrible in their spur.

Trials.

Trials are absolutely necessary:—Cocks vary so much in constitution, from one period to another, that how far a fair trial can be had from such as are imperfect is too well known for me to comment upon. I shall therefore only here observe that a trial of stags is very indeterminate; for they may be excellent in stags and very indifferent in cocks.

The variety of cocks bred in this kingdom, and the opinions of men being as various, it is difficult to say what sort to recommend in preference to another; for in one part of the kingdom they are partials to Piles, in others to

Black Reds,
Silver black-breasted Ducks,
Birchin Ducks,
Dark Greys,
Mealy Greys,
Blacks,
Spangles,
Furnaces,
Pole Cats,
Cuckoos,
Gingers,
Red Duns,
Duns,
Smoky Duns,

in all of which good birds may be found

It has always been a matter of surprise to me, to see the wonderful avidity, even in experienced breeders, in expressing a wish of obtaining a single cock from a day's fight, that has exhibited something out of the common routine of play, in order to breed from when I have been sensible of the impro-

priety of the cross he was destined to make, in fact, with hens that were as dissimilar in feather and other necessary similarities, as possible. If uniformity in their general appearance is absolutely necessary in forming a regular breed, I cannot help expressing my wonder at well-informed men running into an error so fatal to the welfare of judicious breeding; and which must convince a reflecting mind, that from such unnatural or at least incompatible crosses we are indebted to the public for such a strange medley of colours as we see in every main, when a few years' attention would exhibit cocks of a very different stamp. From such incongruous mixtures, we see

1.

The Pheasant-breasted Red,

2.

The large spot-breasted Red,

3.

The blotched-breasted Red,

which are all produced by some inaccuracy of breeding.

4.

The Turkey-breasted Grey,

5.

The large marble-breasted Grey,

6.

The large spot-breasted Grey,

have a cross that does not belong to the true Grey.

7.

The shady-breasted Birchin Duck,

8.

The streaky-breasted Birchin Duck

9.

The marble-breasted Birchin Duck,

have also a cross different from the true feather of the Birchin Ducks.

When I assert that No. 1 is from some inaccuracy of breeding, it must be understood that they deviate from the character of

The true black-breasted Red,

by the introduction of a cross of the Pheasant-feathered Cock or a variety of the Spangle, either of which must deteriorate the original: and that No. 2, under

The large spot-breasted Red,

has been introduced either from the cock or hen in some distant cross of a black, and of course attaches some remains of that colour either in spots, streaks, shades, or blotches, which strain operates as an injury to

The true Black-breasted Red.

The remarks for No. 2 hold good for No. 3.

The Turkey-breasted Greys under No. 4, 5, and 6, are under the same injudicious distant cross of No. 2, and wherever the distribution takes its seat (except a regular tip of the wing) they are inconsistent with that of

The true Mealy Grey.

The shades, streaks, spots, blotches, and marbled, whenever they differ in colour, their varieties arise from a cross possessing those colours at some distant period.

A regular and well chosen system to breed uniformly not

only in feather but in each character respectively is the best mark or criterion of an experienced breeder. When a main exhibits a regular set of brothers that require minute discrimination to distinguish one from the other, it meets with the general plaudit of the surrounding pit.

The feather of the True Black-Breasted Reds should be a clear vivid dark red, without any shade of the black whatever, exteuding from the hack to the extremities—the red upon the hack above, and black beneath, the upper convex side of the wing equally red and black, even those surrounding the posterior—the whole of the tail feathers black, the tip of the wing also—with black beak and black legs.

The brood-hen for such a cock should be the Dark Partridge-coloured Hen, bright red heckled above, black beneath, clean brick breasted, and such to the posterior; black beak and legs.

The Mealy Grey,

which may be ranked next in value to

The true Dark Grey,

is originated from the Black and Mealy White, has been the produce selected from those whose feathers were nearest to the Mealy White, slightly tinged and shaded with black; they have been kept in and in, and established the Mealy Grey, and from those of darker varieties have nearly all our Greys originated: the hen's colour will wonderfully prevail, in general more so than the cock's.

Number 7, 8, and 9, as remarked, differing from

The true Birchin black-breasted Duck-Wing,

are from an introduction of some broken feathers either in the cock or hen, and will gradually infuse those different traits.

The true Birchin black-breasted Duck

has been originally bred from the Black-breasted Red, the Yellow Birchin, and the Grey Duck-Wing Hens.

The feather of No. 3, (Birchin Duck) is a grey heckle tinged with black above, and black beneath, yellow ground with a general shade of dark Birchin, thorough and clean black breasted, yellow legs and beak.

No cocks exhibit a longer period of unfaded health than the True black-breasted Birchin Ducks; and their reputation stands as high in the opinion of sporting men as any general established feather going. When we come to appreciate the cross, you have in them as many excellencies in regard to feather, heel, courage, constitution, and shape, as will warrant an eulogium from the most experienced amateur.

The Piles have originated from a variety of crosses, and which have constituted the many shades you find in this numerous class. There is a strain in these cocks that eminently distinguishes them in that most wished-for gift and excellence—the deadly heel—that generally stamps their prowess in fighting; and it may be here remarked that the lighter colours wield their well-tempered weapons in a more dangerous direction than any other class of cocks.

Their admired excellence is that of close hitters. The true Pile was probably from the Ginger and light Custard Hen and then crossed with Reds and Red Duns.

We have justly to regret that we cannot enjoy all the re quisites in the Piles,

Gingers,
Mealeys,
Yellow Greys,
Blacks,
Pole Cats,
Cuckoos,
Furnaces,
Spangles,
Custards, and
Cuckoos.

They are so liable to intermediate changes of the constitution, become degenerated, soft, and long feathered, delicate in habit, and you find it an arduous undertaking to keep them for any length of time, to any fixed or established excellence.

Breeders of the present day are avoiding those injudicious crosses, and by adopting more uniformity are doing away the many party-coloured birds, which marked a certain want of refinement in breeding, so every way necessary to establish a choice few, which might be restricted to the undermentioned, and would in the course of a little time totally obliterate all others:—say

No. 1. Dark Reds,
2. Dark black-breasted Red,
3. Dark black-breasted Birchin Ducks,
4. Dark black-breasted Berry Birchin,
5. Silver black-breasted Duckwing Grey,
6. Clean Mealy Grey,
7. Dark black-breasted Grey, and
8. Red Duns.

The whole of these if bred with care may be produced to a standard of uniform regularity, taken in their progressive numbers: thus

No. 1. Crosses well with the Partridge Hen, with No. 2 and 3 Hens.
2. Crosses well with No. 2 and 3 Hens.
3. & 4. Cross — As a cross already they are best kept to their respective feathers, always in youth.
5. 6. 7. Will cross with each other with his own feather, invariably.
8. Will cross with No. 1 and 2.

Many of my readers no doubt will say, that a good cock of any colour is acceptable, and individually may be esteemed so; but a regular pen of cocks uniform in feather, blood, and constitution, must have the advantage of an opposite adversary who claims his support from the many.

Piles are not in the number of my selects, although many that I have seen fight have had a share of my admiration, from a peculiar mode of fighting, singularly their own, their appearance being attractive and prepossessing. But all my endeavours to breed them have ever been unsuccessful; and as what I have to offer as a guide to others is from the sober light of experience, rather than from the delusive glare of plausible theories, I have omitted them in my favourite select. Perhaps it is too late in the day for me to make any further attempt to establish the true Pile, yet blessed at this time with a due share of undisturbed good health, I purpose to make an immediate trial. An undeniable cock has been offered that fought at Manchester, whose character admirably points him out as a proper object—and am now in anxious search for a suitable mate. My success, if I live to accomplish it, will be better and more ably detailed by a gentleman who may be induced to publish a second edition of this work.

REMARKS

ON THE

Change in Constitution.

It is one of the most essential requisites that appertains to the welfare of producing an unexceptionable breed of cocks, to detect with anxious attention even the slightest traits of change in the constitution: it may be traceable in a variety of circumstances:

1. From having bred too many years in and in.
2. From a serious loss of blood in fighting.
3. From unknown injuries in the vital and other parts, highly injurious to health.

From juvenile contests they likewise become frequently faded. And from stags to cocks they meet with such injuries as are seldom got the better of.

Many cocks are frequently bred from, without being fought. An unfavourable change with some has taken place from this circumstance: therefore to avoid any possible introduction, however trivial, omit the use of him for a brood cock, and take a blooming unmolested brother in his place. At certain seasons I have known that contagious distemper, the roup, make strange ravages. There are few, who have been breeders of this noble bird, but are well acquainted with the disorder, which issues from the nostrils and incrusts the tongue: the livid taint brings on a noxious blood—their plume fades—and their wings flag—with gaping and wheezing throat. A fever generally attends this disorder, and they are remarkably craving for water. Whenever these appearances are observed, (for its baneful mischief spreads with rapid pace) eradicate the

sickly part from the sound, and give vent to the rank effluvia which often infects their eyes with frothy streams.

The under-mentioned recipe has been esteemed a sovereign balsam, nay even a specific :—

TAKE—Green rue and sorrel, cut small, each half a handful.
Celadine, half a handful.
Flower of brimstone, sufficient to form the mass, with a quarter of a pound of fresh butter;
Made into pills about the size of a small nutmeg, giving one for three nights together.

There are several compositions given, but I know of none equal to the above.

Adverting to the change in constitution. Where your fowls have enjoyed a series of blooming health, and in all other respects unexceptionable,—but nevertheless in the routine of your breeding a sudden change takes place, their well known character would induce you to investigate with the strictest scrutiny, from what part of the brood it originated ; and if a regular account has been kept, this will not be difficult to ascertain. If they are derived from several sisters, with one cock, it may be difficult to detect from which of these sisters the diseased bird was produced—supposing the change to be only partial and not general. The sire of course claims your first attention. Mark steadily his exterior to see that he retains

The standard ruddy bloom of health ;
That his feathers are not dry nor loose
But mellow in the feel, bright and firm ;
His flesh firm and compact ;
His legs well under him, and his crow clear and sound.

These enjoyed, we would suppose the taint is not in the cock ; but looks and feel are frequently deceptive. Trust not therefore immediately to appearances, for unsound cocks will

shew themselves when feeding and in their fight—therefore as far as regards the cock let that be your ultimatum.

On the investigation of the hens, it is necessary to call to mind, if any of these sisters exhibited any symptoms of decline during the season these diseased birds were bred—yet probably not then very apparent—still some circumstances may be brought to recollection to enable you in part, to fix upon some one or more of these sisters, whose deportment and exterior might create suspicion, and lead to detection. But if no such derangement occurs, you have then to scrutinise each sister (supposing the whole to be living) with all possible attention, to see if they are in possession of all those requisites that constitute health; such as those detailed for the cock, with these additional remarks, that hens upon a decline have always their ordure profusely attached to their feathers behind, the plume faded and dry, the body emaciated, the head wan, and the eye watery.

If such are found, and the cocks prove to your satisfaction, we must conclude it arises from those such symptoms were found upon—and the rest of the sisters being undeniably in health—and your change only partial—we may safely conclude that they would produce a healthy race—and those remaining brothers and sisters the change was found in, are to all intents and purposes inadequate to produce every wished-for excellence; and I have found from repeated trials, by adopting the following mode, that a cross in this case was never necessary, but frequently robbed them of some of those rare qualifications they had uniformly enjoyed. A general failure wants no cross, but total eradication.

To promote the means of keeping these fowls in their wonted health and valuable acquisitions, if you are in possession of stags and pullets as well as cocks and hens, select the blooming of them both, and put stags to the two-year old hens and cocks to the pullets, and you may for years continue in the same blood, observing to put them invariably together in the above recited manner, never on any account making use of either cock or hen after their being two years old; for by adhering rigidly to present youth to youth, you can scarcely fail of success. It seems then that nothing is wanting but to discriminate with judgment in selecting those for this purpose, and to keep a watchful eye hereafter in their progressive growth.

I know of no system in breeding so big with error, as that of the general propensity of crossing. Nor do I think it warrantable, unless your present brood of fowls is wanting in some required excellence which cannot be deduced from themselves; for although health is the grand desideratum, yet they may be deficient in heel, which in a game cock is so essentially necessary, that unless they possess it, we consider them of little value, let their other qualifications be ever so great. To accomplish this, a cross becomes absolutely necessary; and such a one as may not only contribute to that end, but also be similar in feather, constitution, colour of the legs and beak, as your own; and by such a choice you bid fair to have them regular. The procuring a hen or cock every way calculated to meet your wishes, may be attended with some difficulty, but they are to be met with either by interest or money. If you obtain a cock put him to your own hens; but if a pullet or hen then to your own cock. I should prefer the latter to the former, so much so that I should rather give two guineas for a pullet or hen, than I would one for a cock.

If you are fortunate in the produce, decline breeding a second time with your own cock, but with a stag of that produce next year with your mother, and on the following year the same stag (then a cock) to pullets of this second produce. You will then have three-fourths of your improved cross, and you may follow the same method as laid down for the continuance of breeding under the change in constitution.

When we come to consider how long cocking has been a favourite diversion in this island, it becomes a matter of surprise that refinement in breeding has not kept equal pace with many other departments in the sporting line—more especially when it is known that gentlemen of the first abilities have ever been engaged upon the sod. But there are exceptions to this remark: for the present day speaks loudly of the fame and renown of the Cheshire cocks, and I should hold myself wanting in due deference, if I were to pass over my acknowledgments of Lord Derby's cocks, whose achievements and regularity exhibit sufficient proofs of his lordship's well-founded system and attention. But my allusion is upon general breeding, which has but little claim to the character of scientific amateurs.

It is a task of no common delicacy to please so numerous a

class of breeders, who are so wonderfully bigotted in their own practice, still I hope they will not be offended with the frankness of this remark—and if the general part of my readers will benefit by the perusal of my own, it will be a flattering result.

Remarks.

I know not if the art of breeding exceeds that of feeding; though I am well aware that the latter, like the former, has never yet attained those scientific principles so as to enable feeders to fight equally regular and well; for how frequently we see individuals in this profession out-strip their antagonists beyond the bounds of that proportion a scientific man should labour under, though equally well cocked, and enjoying every mutual and local accommodation. In the next meeting the same feeders, with the same sort of cocks, and the same antagonists, shall experience an equal, if not superior defeat—whence arises the uncertainty of cocking.

I am aware that in all professions you meet with some more eminently gifted than others—either by the advantage of su-

perior education, or by a long course of practice. But gross and serious errors must, in the end, prove their inability to become favourites of the public. I do not mean by this to reflect upon any individual feeder, or the profession at large; for I well know they have to contend with difficulties, not easily surmounted; for a feeder who comes a thorough stranger, where he has not been in the habit of feeding, and equally so to the constitution of the cocks he has engaged to feed—his knowledge of course must rest upon appearances merely of a superficial nature, not equal to the test of experience, which enables him to provide for them with confidence, and he knows how much they are capable of turning off without waiting events;—in fact, the more experience he has with his employer's cocks the greater probability of success: for they have to combat with various constitutions in feeding, and frequently dissimilar consequences result therefrom. A prior knowledge to what extent they can bear reducing, and to what degree of facility they are raised, are beneficial acquirements, and must preponderate over an entire stranger. It is not much to be wondered at, that a feeder under such a disadvantage should fail in his first attempt with an antagonist, who has been in the habit of feeding the same cocks for years. These failures frequently take place, and are as frequently the consequence of changing feeders. In the six great mains which I fought with——Cussans, esq. at Loughborough and Derby, John Beastal fed for me, whereas Mr. Cussans had a fresh feeder every main: the result was that Beastal won five mains out of six—from 11 to 7 a head. Here not a feeder but David Smith had any previous knowledge of their cocks—cocks too of his own breeding, and were the well-known Greys; but my Black Reds under the many year's experience of their feeder, seldom or ever failed of success. A propensity to change under these circumstances (more particularly if your feeder ranks as an able professor) should not be encouraged, because he has failed in his first attempt: but let him feed your trial cocks with as much attention as for the main; give him all the local knowledge of them that you can, and let him be acquainted with every character of your fowls, and you will find him superior to any change you generally can adopt. You will not find yourself much at a loss, on his progressive fighting, to determine your future choice; he will either exhibit some trait in favour of your initiation, or he may drop into mediocrity.

I have remarked from several years' fighting, that those feeders who have advantaged themselves considerably a-head on the first day's fight, were frequently a-back on the second; when those whose cocks were advancing to perfection for the second day, outstripped their antagonists by many a battle a-head on that day, whereas had they produced their cocks nearly equal the first day, the mains would have been much better contested than they were: that is, the majority in the mains would not be so great. Why each day's fight should not be co-equal, I am yet to learn, for there is a proper time allotted to their correspondent weights;—they should be up to their condition on the respective days.

It is not intended that a pen of cocks should have three gradations—indifferent the first, better the second, and superior the third,—but the cocks are set conformable to their weights, and on those very days they are calculated to be up to their fight.

Let us admit that one of the two pens of cocks may be superior, and the feeders equal in ability—that superlority will prevail more or less—but if there is an error in judgment they must suffer. I do not mean to enforce that feeding gives every exclusive advantage; for it is well known that cocks shall be equal in game, constitution, and diet, yet if bad heelers, the odds must be greatly against them, for it will be predominant; but when we see birds of equal stamp so unequal in their fight, my readers would not be at a loss to say what was wanting.

REMARKS

ON

Steady Breeding, etc

The well-known Cheshire Piles have always been favourites with the gentlemen of the sod; and for reasons most urgent, for you have in them every thing that constitutes good fighters: they are lofty, well shaped, good game, uncommon heelers, and perhaps their feathers as little objectionable, taking them in the whole, as any Piles in the kingdom. The breeder of these birds has continually, and I may say invariably, for many years, pursued a steady and uniform conduct in keeping them to themselves. Even the light Piles have been kept separate from the dark, and by judiciously putting them together he has established the well-known reputation of these cocks.

Mr. Rilands has not split upon the rock which many breeders have, and still continue to do; but steadily endeavours to amend any deficiency in these fowls, by a well managed choice of the whole. Many attempts have been made in different parts of the kingdom, to cross the Cheshire Piles with similar feather, but I never yet learnt that they were equal to the original Cheshire. I have taken much pains to establish, what I have ever esteemed valuable cocks—but they never produced anything equal to themselves, notwithstanding the hens that were put to them were the Beverly Piles, and by no means inferior to the Cheshire. Perhaps their local situation may be more conducive to their constitutions than any other country, and I am fully persuaded that circumstance contributes very much to their excellency.

We have but few instances where a set of cocks have been so regularly kept and continued as these, and probably few

have fought with more general eclat and success. To the prevailing instability of too many breeders may justly be attributed the very few, who can boast of being in possession of so regular a set of cocks, as the above recited. There are a great many juvenile breeders in the county I now reside in, whose engagements in cocking are considerable and frequent, and, if I may hazard from report, are exhibiting cocks high in repute: they are too, in that situation in life which can command all the necessary requisites to establish whatever may be deemed perfection in cocks, and if steadily pursued, I doubt not but will be accomplished.

This idea does not arise from a solitary instance with myself for I have experienced a degeneration to a greater extent than that of the Cheshire Piles. In the years 1785 and 1786 I bought of the Rev. Mr. Brooks, of Shiffnal, Shropshire, thirty pair of cocks, that were brought from thence to Loughborough, and I believe no cocks ever gained a higher reputation than they, through the whole contest of three days, with advantage of nine a-head; the cocks pitted against them were selected from the first amateurs surrounding Loughborough. Our cocks had sustained an injury which we believed at the time to be serious; but Beastal's never failing cordial (which might be called a grand specific) renovated all their finer faculties, and spurred them on to victory. Many were the applications for the purpose of breeding, and on that year as well as the following I never bred more, having put them to hens my Reverend friend had sent me with the cocks, as well as to my own that were similar in feather, &c. The whole of these bred in 1785 and 1786, kept up their character, and we had every flattering hope of enjoying all we could wish for in these cocks; but to our great surprise and disappointment, those bred in 1787 and fought in 1789, exhibited such a falling off, that very much deranged our future breeding—nor could we ever recover their pristine excellence—as there was no prognostic of any fade or change in constitution, to rouse us to any trial, or any thing to disturb that high confidence reposed; so of course they were fought without any trial, but I am well aware that we ought not to be governed by the most flattering appearances, or past merit, but give them a fair trial. How far that can be accomplished with strict propriety calls for the aid of practice to point out the particular seasons, most natural and congenial to make trial of cocks that are to be fought in March and April—which were the allotted months

we fought in—and if it were improper twenty-six years back, how much more so would it be at this juncture, when our springs are much different, partaking more of winter than spring. Of course our cocks are considerably backwarder, that any trial betwixt casting and perfecting must certainly be decided against [a trial when stags, unless you fight stags is not to be depended upon]—but take them between cocks and stags when in full feather, and I doubt not but at such a period you may abide by the result. From the very hour that a change in the system takes place in a cock, previous to moulting he has more or less fever; and in that progressive work of nature fever has always a share in the act; this must operate unfriendly upon the constitution, oppress and flag his natural gaiety, and render him unfit for vigorous action, and so in a greater degree in the next state of renovating his feathers, and therefore unfit for the purposes of trial.

It may be thought superfluous to give a detail of our proceeding with these fowls—except briefly to say that every practicable attention in all the various departments in breeding were bestowed to hold them to their original excellence—but proved unavailing. Our endeavours then to develop this extraordinary deviation were unremitting, and every inquiry and investigation were made use of to elucidate and aid our opinions, what might be the cause which had wrought so serious a change in such valuable fowls—the aggregate of which only afforded a solitary surmise that a removal to distant country was the cause. Before I quit this subject I cannot refrain from observing, that several of these cocks up to three years old were fought in different mains, three or four times, with success—and one Ginger Red in particular fought in five mains in one year, twice at Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, at Lichfield, Derby, and Nottingham, without apparent injury: this cock's exploits will be found in full in the first number of the Sporting Magazine. Of all the variety of cocks in upwards of fifty years' extensive knowledge of them I never yet met with any that were equal to the never-to-be-forgotten Shropshire Reds.

ON

THE NECESSITY OF MAKING

Trials.

THE mode of trial varies as much as any circumstance in the routine of cocking. Those who breed but few, implicitly rely upon them from one period to another: others content themselves with a trial of stags, or from some imperfect brother, taken from his walk and immediately devoted to proof—perhaps pitted against a cock considerably heavier than himself, contesting a struggle under every disadvantage,—and this only to know if he is good game. These trials are too incompetent, and too trivial for any number, much more so for a set of cocks, where a main of any consequence is depending. It is now found highly expedient with those who have various sorts, not to hazard a match without a regular private trial, under the management of those who feed it—and from such fair cocks from whose actions they may form a proper judgment of the whole. In this trial they ought to be fed with the same caution as those for a main, abating no one circumstance whatever; and where a great many are bred, they may be so selected, as to match them sufficiently accurate, which will put them in the same situation as those who are meant to be depended upon; and if any suspicion arises from such trial, if those are brothers, let the survivors be cut up, giving them every equalizing chance through the whole contest. If this is not complied with, it cannot be esteemed a fair trial.

It may be necessary to explain, to some of my readers, what is to be expected from a fair trial. Cocks proving good game denote only a part of their excellency, for they may be deep

game, and yet be deficient in what constitutes the best and first quality of a cock—that of being a good heeler; and if thus wanting they must be deemed imperfect. They should be

Close hitters,
Bloody heelers,
Steady fighters,
Good mouths, and come to every point.

A hasty fighter indicates a desire to get shut of his cock—and if his antagonist gives him too much trouble, he will frequently give him ground for agreement. It is also a bad sign to see him crouch and give his head away: nor is a shifty cock to be admired, notwithstanding he sometimes win.—There are cocks, even in the extremity of death, that will show you the goodness of their intentions, so much so as to render themselves dangerous.

To judge with nice discrimination the various effects the piercing heel has upon the frame, more immediately to catch the momentary gash upon the vital parts, to watch with cautious eye how he bears the ebb and flow of departing existence—as in this gasping stage (if I may refine upon the sentence) their heroic fortitude is frequently conspicuous, and their last moments are a trait of the greatest magnanimity. On the other hand some cocks would display an early propensity to shrink from the sod of danger; for as there are degrees of cowardice, so are those degrees variously exhibited—and many a coward, if they had the power, in their fleeting passage would quit the field of battle. He, whose interest it is to mark and to commit to paper this scene of combat, gives due merit and applause to such meritorious warriors, who have stood foremost in all their various exploits, that the surviving brothers and sisters may hereafter do justice to these departed heroes, and hold up their fame and glory to their allotted extent. When I am speaking of various degrees of cowardice, so are they variously urged by pride and jealousy, the least alarm of either hurries them on into that impetuosity (more remarkable in some than in others) which with them is not to be appeased but by death.

A trial holds to view, probably all that is valuable as well

as defective; for they exhibit as many modes of defence and attack as the pugilistic tribe—and their blows have more or less of the destructive, according to their better art;—a wide striking cock seldom carries death with his heels; if his legs are out of the direction of his body, so of course they are further extended, and they are generally esteemed dry spurred cooks—and it generally happens that they are a low flying fluttering cock,—but on the contrary, if his legs are in a due direction to his body, he is more erect, rises higher, and is a close hitter,—his battles are generally short.

Brothers will not always prove equally good; yet if close bred, from a regular set of sisters, any little apparent want of constitution should not suffer them to run away.

A few years ago, some friends thought it necessary to make a cross with a set of favourite hens, then well known by the appellation of the Old cross-marked Sort. They were given to understand that cocks, similar in feather, &c. and long in favourite repute, would fight at Nottingham. These consisted of six full brothers, fine, lofty, boney cocks; four out of the six fought, and in such a style of excellence, that, exclusive of their previous recommendation, it was thought prudent to purchase the two unmatched.

Merely saying that they fought in a style of excellence is not doing that justice to my worthy friend, who pointed out their superiority, and whose judgment and recommendation gave a decided preference in their favour: I need only to say that they followed closely to the heels of our favourite Shropshires, and to them we refer our readers; and like them they never produced their equals. Every thing which could contribute to the welfare of breeding, was bestowed upon the brood, and their progeny gave us such flattering hopes, that we were undetermined if we should give them a trial when stags, but the produce being very numerous, and in the midst of our annual great main, it would have been placing that confidence, experience urges me to say we ought not to have—therefore on mature deliberation a selected number were committed to the management of our old feeder Beastal—fed at the house of one of the gentlemen concerned, and enjoyed all the advantages of cocks devoted for a regular main, and from this cautious selection were matched with great equality—every thing was conducted with that degree of regularity which would

have done credit to the first mains;—the setters had equal merit—due attention was paid to them in their intervals of fighting—and all the laws of cocking were rigidly adhered to. I have seen many mains, and a great many trials of stags, but I never yet saw any that exhibited such proofs of every excellence, as these stags manifested throughout every stage of trial. If a trial of stags could be a certain criterion of their goodness in a future state, as cocks, how pre-eminently high we should have ranked, in our endeavours to meet our numerous antagonists, with such raræ aves,—the consummate superiority must have carried every thing before them. Highly gratified as we were in their juvenile state, we were also intent upon another proof ere the mainr came on: the same attention was paid to them in cocks, as to the stags, but what a falling off was there; such as would induce a man to decline any attempt at future breeding,—their constitutions were so glaringly changed, that all our hopes were baffled—our arrangements disconcerted—and we were thrown upon the public for a supply which in the end was the loss of the only main out of six fought. Such a carnage ensued as seldom takes place, for the whole were made away with—and the surviving old cocks, in their trial, but too plainly pointed out to us the failure we experienced in their sons. My own died rotten on his walk, the others, though struggling under a bad constitution, evinced evident proofs of their innate excellence. A brother to the brood cocks, after being struck blind in the first fly, and won his battle, was bought at a high price by the late Mr. Brooks, in London, whose knowledge in these birds ranked high with the gentlemen of the sod;—he put him to some of his Spitfire hens, that enjoyed all the flow of health, still the progeny was equally unfortunate. These cocks had been known and fed many years by Beastal—and his annual remarks upon the superiority of them were not lost upon his employers. Such failures as these are unpleasant drawbacks in pursuit of cocking, and have their serious attendants. Our references relative to this unfortunate change was easy and satisfactory—that the breeder of these cocks had kept them in and in for so many years, without, that requisite caution of putting youth to youth, was the rock he split upon—and hurled destruction on his favourite brood.

These details have for their object—

To point out the liability of change in the constitution, from

a removal of cocks from a country they were bred in, to a distant one:

The uncertainty of crossing to advantage:

To show that a trial of stags is not to be depended upon, and the necessity of trial when cocks:

That cocks may hold their constitution until they are two years old:

A failure in the constitution at three:

The impropriety of keeping in and in without putting youth to youth.

INVESTIGATION

OF CIRCUMSTANCES MOST LIKELY TO PRODUCE

A

Bad Constitution in Cocks.

THE well-known axiom, that "prevention of disease is better than cure," cannot be more properly enforced, than after the following recital of the various transitions in the cock from health to disease.

I do not feel myself liable to contradiction when I assert that nothing is more common than to breed from a cock, after having fought not only one battle, but several; the more battles he has been engaged in, the greater recommendation to make use of him as a brood cock. It would seem, upon reflection, unnecessary to dwell upon the impropriety of such a choice—but the mischief is of such magnitude, that it would have been unpardonable to be silent upon the subject. When we come to consider the position for combat, is it supposed possible that they should avoid giving and receiving a stab, more or less injurious; for they have no shield to ward off the deadly weapon from the vital parts; the interstices are numerous; bone, muscle, tendon, are all liable; vessels may be divided, or perforated; parts may be wounded, lacerated, or contused—and probably seldom restored to healthy actions:—the quantity of blood lost or effused, may of itself ruin his constitution. Under all these liabilities, who would build his hopes upon such a crazy fabric; admitting without a doubt that such cocks are made use of, are we to wonder at meeting with so many that have delicate constitutions.

The next, and not least of the causes, is that originating from the effects of moulting. We know from experience that cocks, as well as hens, in particular years suffer such difficulties in that wonderful act of nature, inasmuch as to render their lives precarious for a length of time. It is well known that a fever, more or less, is ever attendant on this act of nature, and I have frequently observed that this operation is sometimes arrested, and remains for a shorter or longer period in a dormant state, without exciting any perceptible commotion in the economy—and when in this state death generally ensues—or it leaves them in a debilitated and faded state. At other times we see it rapid in its progress, and the ordinary course of nature enjoyed and perfected.

If hens and cocks have not completed this renovation, and fully arrived to their health and bloom, both the one and the other are unfit for the purposes of breeding.

I have remarked for several years, that if either my hens or pullets should be deprived of setting when nature prompts, they do not moult kindly in the approaching season; how far and in what manner this resistance to nature operates on the constitution, I am unable to divine.

Cocks fed in the month of March, cut out of feather, and not matched, tendered by the mode of feeding and close covering, turned out in the middle or latter end of the same month, and perhaps the season as inclement as any part of the year,—what must the sufferings be of cocks so exposed?—it so far operates upon them that instead of being lively and blooming, they are dull, heavy, and listless,—for as yet, notwithstanding they have been up and fed, nature had not then completed her work, for not one cock in ten is fine at that juncture—and the instance of turning out, would, without a doubt, procrastinate the act of progressive nature, and leave him unfit for the purposes of breeding, or in fact for any other where much was depending. The practice of fighting mains in March, as they have presented themselves for many years, seems to me to be unnatural and premature; but this must be submitted to others, to judge for themselves—for in this chapter I am only intending to mark out the causes which have retarded, or accelerated the progressive work of breeding.

They say "of evils, we are to choose the least;" and I think

it is a much smaller evil to feed and to fight, when cocks are in full feather, and in high health, than to take them in the state described. It is not only unnatural but you are not giving this noble bird an equal chance with the other animals we select for our sport.

To the catalogue I have already commenced, I must not omit the following addition:—That of the severe injury stags meet with (particularly the forward ones) in the months of November and December—so much so as to arrest their growth, and frequently to leave a taint upon the constitution, that renders them unfit for breeding or fighting:—when stags of this description go out, it would be right to make a memorandum of the injury they sustained. A variety of circumstances are here adduced, in order to point out to my readers the necessity of being very guarded and circumspect in every department appertaining to cocking, and particularly those whose engagements are numerous, and who fight for large sums. We know that notwithstanding all our exertions and endeavours, they are not to be always crowned with success—but the discerning sportsman will not be at a loss how to account for the failure, and will give due credit to meritorous cocks.

Remarks

ON SOME FAVOURITE BREED

OF

COCKS.

When Sir Charles Sedley and Hugo Maynell, Esq. fought their long mains, I believe no contests in the annals of cocking were marked with such general eclat. Their characters as judicious sportsmen stood conspicuously and deservingly high. They fought for large sums, and backed their cocks with such unrivalled spirit, that before or since, no betting has been in equal competition. Great confidence was placed in their cocks, and their feeders were upon a par,—under such circumstances, high betting is ever the consequence. The mains were upon the decline previous to my becoming a breeder, but a considerable number of cocks and hens were left in the neighbourhood around my residence. As they were relinquished, and become the property of the possessors, I was in the habit of purchasing a number of both—particularly from one of the breeders of these fowls—those that were fought were equal to any that had gone before them, and as a young breeder, I thought myself singularly fortunate in having to commence my pursuit in cocking with such well-known valuable fowls. My selected few, as brood fowls, were put down to one of the sweetest retired spots my neighbourhood could boast of, and comprised every accommodation that could render them secure, quiet, and healthful—and no close breeding could be superior. Under these local advantages, early in the spring (and the springs then were congenial and delightful) I had three hatches produced so regular, and altogether so promising, that I could not help anticipating a future pleasure in the pro-

gressive growth of what I considered valuable birds—and no young cocker was so highly gratified in having at hand seventeen stags and twelve pullets, not a feather in the whole that did not challenge their originals. So pleasing was the recollection of these birds even at the distance of fifty years or more, that I omitted prefacing this recital with a description. They were a clear Mealy Grey, nearly white breasted, without spot or streak, about four pounds six, to about four pounds eight ounces—high standing, boney, and black legs—close feathered, short hecked—small snake head, and full dark eye—their walk easy, firm, majestic, and their breast gracefully prominent, their shoulders broad and up, and their body gradually tapering to the tail; their actions were in unison with their shapes. To enumerate the superior qualities of these cocks, would be reciting again those of the Shropshire, and like them, when crossed, they lost their original goodness; they became soft feathered, and partook of all the variety of the Greys. Had these birds enjoyed a judicious cross selected from those that were left—I have not a doubt but they would have been excellent for many years. The only cocks that bore any similarity to those, were bred by Mr. Hopkinson, and what few I saw of them fought at Nottingham. I, at that juncture, entertained an idea that they were a part of the same family.

Unfortunately, three months previous to my cocks being two-year-old, I was abroad, and was nearly two years and a half absent; of course they were entirely lost to me, for on my return they were differently disposed of.

The Black Cocks of Lord Vere

Were introduced by Mr. Thomas Wilson, of Burton, Staffordshire, my place of residence, and I know of no amateur so eminently qualified as he was to do justice to any breed of cocks, however high in repute—few professors in those days were so systematic in their mode of breeding, nor were they likely to lose their former reputation in the transfer.

They were a perfect jet black, gipsey faced, black legs, rather elegant than muscular—lofty in their manner of fighting—close in their feather and well shaped; such was their established character, that wherever it was their lot to fight the odds always preponderated in their favour—in fact, level betting never followed their contest; and for three years these cocks maintained a decided priority over most in the circuit they fought in. An opposite interest in some mains operated as a bar to our usual intimacy, which deprived me of being personally informed of the alteration of these cocks, that were very conspicuous the two years ensuing,—a diminution in their appearance, their feathers long and dangling, their fire much abated, and so much unlike themselves, that they were more like crows than cocks. For reasons above stated I could not learn the cause from himself of these material changes in such valuable cocks, but if hearsay authority could be depended upon, Mr. W. had persevered in breeding from old stock—the result a certain consequence of derangement. That this error which had so frequently happened to others with all its train of mischief, should have escaped the active penetration and vigilance of Mr. W. who was sensibly alive to the refinements of breeding, has ever been a matter of surprise, for whenever it has crossed my ideas I have been at a loss, conclusively to account for it, otherwise than by a rooted infatuation, not easily to be conquered, of that too obsolete idea—that old favourite cocks may be continued for the use of propagation for a series of years, with the same propriety as the first year. If analogy will bear me out, with reason's aid—that a man of sixty and a woman of forty-five shall produce as fine children as a man of twenty-five and a woman of twenty-two, then the impropriety falls at once, and that we have to refer to the catalogue of other causes enumerated in this work. These conclusions are promulgated from well-known facts, arising from extensive practice, and for the better understanding of which, I have given the following solution:

Comparison.

Stag 1-year-old with hens 2-years-old—man 18, woman 22.
Cock 2-years-old with pullets man 25, woman 22.
Cock 2-years-old with hen 2-years-old—man 25, woman 22.
Cock 3-years-old with hens 3-years—man 40 to 50, woman 45.
Cock 4-years-old with hens 4-years—man 50 to 60, woman 45.

From five to six, the cock should give way to his sons, and the hens to sit and nurse; admitting this axiom, allow me to express a hope that the time is not very remote, when the practice will be done away with,—that the contrary will be universally adopted by discriminating breeders,—and that unfounded prejudices and vague infatuation will vanish before the accumulated evidence of the advantages arising from a judicious practice.

These cursory details of the different breed of cocks I have adduced, in order to impress upon my readers the importance and necessity of being strictly cautious in breeding from the same fowls, without a due regard to youth: as well as when a cross is necessary with those that have no affinity. To characterise the appropriate feather and other concomitants that assimilate nearest the originals you intend to cross with; to blend the constituent qualifications to produce that uniformity so much admired, and which gives that perfection and superiority over that system an incautious breeder pursues ever to his disadvantage, has been my principal aim in writing the foregoing pages.

Cock-Feeders.

Whoever of the profession may peruse these observations, will take the motive for the deed. I have suffered materially in a match of as fine stags as ever were exhibited, by the improvident neglect of my feeder, in not airing his room and pens. Even those that are frequently used for that purpose should not be exempt from this caution. Therefore it is a duty every feeder owes to his employer, as well as to himself, to see that the room is thoroughly cleaned and well aired, and that the pens are removed from the walls, taken out of the room, and well scraped and washed, and that they are as dry as the air can make them, by being exposed to it for at least eight or ten days previous to their being brought in,—that they may be properly and duly exposed to the warmth during the time the fire is continued. Pens contract a fustiness from being a short time out of use, more particularly when vacant the greater part of the year—so as to render them disgusting, and brings on nauseas and distemper.

To see the lesser minutiæ properly prepared is highly necessary; such as the straw, that it is clean thrashed, sweet, and very dry—and I should strongly recommend the use of distilled soft water, or at any rate the best soft water filtered that can be procured; and your barley thin skinned, old, white and dry, and deprived of the ends, as much as thrashing in a bag will effect: by so doing it will digest the easier. As to the other articles of diet, they must be left to the management and discretion of the feeder.

Coverings, according to the season, are used thick or thin, whichever of the two let them be remarkably clean, sweet, and well aired: I should prefer a regular set for the purpose, to be the master's property—I have seen very improper coverings. If your room is sufficiently large, and you have a regular set of pens, never suffer them to be fixed up to the walls, but put

in frames with upright standards in the centre of the room—that is, double pens not directly opposite to each other, but one of the opposities a pen distant from the other. Cocks should be considered nearly stationary in their pens, they cannot avoid surrounding effluvia, and as walks imbibe much moisture they are long ere they emit it—and of course the humidity is imbibed by the pens. If the pens by being stationed in the centre become liable to a partial air, I have known double doors made use of as a seclusion, and equally so for security—the fewer visitors the better, and as few handlers as possible. Cocks may be said to be immured in a prison, when in their pens—deprived of their natural air and exercise, debarred the enjoyment of proudly escorting their hens, in culling and selecting whatever contributes to their health—roused and ruffled by noisy and repeated pride, until he becomes jaded and hoarse, and shy even to his scanty meal: use reconciles him to his prison, and he becomes familiar to the offers of those artificial luxuries which warm and exhilarate the system, and help to soften the tediousness of confinement and intrusive handling. I think it is almost unnecessary to say anything upon the subject of cleanliness in every progressive step; many little attentions are so many gradual promoters to their welfare. An industrious turn straw has it much in his power to contribute thereto, and in the department of shaking and raising the straw the dung falls to the bottom—and of course, must by heat become offensive; surely it is no very difficult undertaking to thoroughly cleanse the pens, not only of straw, but of every apparent filth—and the better to accomplish this, have two spare pens, marked Nos. 1 and 2, equally and delicately clean with the other, one at the top, the other at the bottom—and these two pens will answer the purpose of your shifting the whole from top to bottom, until they are all finished; and this may be done with the least possible trouble: two people may go through this necessary and cleanly operation without any injury to the cocks—the enjoyment of fresh straw every day must add much to their comfort. Several pens may be emptied in a large twig basket, in preference to emptying them upon the floor, which would create dust, &c. and so on to the end. A cock-feeder in London very high in esteem, every morning made use of a pint of the strongest vinegar he could procure, and with a large sponge washed the two divisions of each pen which the cocks fed through, and which he thought prevented any disagreeable consequences arising from the multiplied exhalations of the whole. This

sponge appeared to me to be a very useful applicant to cleanse and absorb unnecessary moisture. Another excellent accommodation was that of hospital pens adjoining the room he fed in, these were also very clean and well strawed, for the purpose of those cocks that won, and the same number put upon the hospital pen as the cock fought out of: so that they were easily recognised, and the feeding pens by this method were kept pure and sweet. Pens might be constructed so as to take to pieces, cleaned and kept dry until wanted, and put together at a small expence, which I should recommend as preferable to all others.

Cocks are frequently brought up from their walks in damp and filthy bags, which is a bad practice, and never ought to be suffered. We cannot be too cautious in guarding against every possible circumstance that might introduce any unfavourable disease in the hens; such has been the case frequently, and instances have been known from villainous motives.

In respect to feeding, it is a province I never encountered—nevertheless I have paid much attention to the different modes each feeder made use of, and although varied in several respects, yet each have fought with good and bad success in their respective modes. It requires an extensive practice to form a complete judgment of the condition of a cock on the day of fight—much depends upon a good finger, and a knowledge of that position a cock puts himself in, in and out of condition, exhibiting different feeds and forms; it is not the feel that feeders are in the habit of using to know if a cock returns his meat, but that feel which gives to the grasp that firmness, compactness, warmth, and fire, all of which are felt and seen:—the eye pourtrays the rest of his condition.

The firmness of his flesh indicates health and good feeding. The contraction of his legs to his body, vigor and heat; and a cock under these circumstances, shews what is termed full of fight—the contrary is soon felt; for he is

Soft and heavy in hand,
Legs low and dangling,
Eyes dull and unmeaning,
And his whole cold to the feel.

When a cock arrives at the top or height of his feed, art can go no further, and when it takes place the day he fights much credit is due to the feeder; for cocks retain that zest but a small time, and become retrogade every day after. All cocks when set, should be so ordered, that they should arrive at their proper fighting condition on that very day they are to fight—if either under or over—and his antagonist fortunately otherwise—it is at these critical failures that one side is so frequently cast in the background.

Cocks vary much in their mode of fighting;

Some are hasty and fiery,
Others cautious, wary, and close hitters,
Some wide and generally dry heeled,
Whilst many are lofty and darting.

Those that are low and fluttering, are seldom dangerous in their heels; the latter description are those that are destitute of that tapering shape that so eminently distinguishes them in their superior mode of fighting. Cocks that are as broad behind as before, have their legs thrown out of the line of the body, and of course are wide in their fly and dry heeled.

To judge well of a battle requires much attention—a quick discerning eye—a knowledge of those parts of the cock most liable to sudden and destructive fate, and which turns the fluctuating tide of odds against them; others that are more slow in their effects, yet fatal to their victory—many are momentarily crippled and yet not immediately detected: variously are the heels directed, and many parts are perforated with little injury in the heat of battle, although felt when cold—these are not alarming to the adept, and they take advantage of those who are:—a cut throat is for the most part very conspicuous.

A well-known amateur describing a battle has the following lines:—

"Now hostile rage each daring foe maintains,
"And death, as fate inclines, alternate reigns;
"In various shapes the missive blow appears,
"And dire destruction 'midst the conflict bears—

"Now purple life unloads the turgid veins,
"And gushing down the crowded circus, stains,
"Or stagnates, swells the throat, and vital air restrains."

Copy of an Article for a Cock-match.

Articles of Agreement made the ———— day of ———— 181 between W. S. and J. C.

First, The said parties have agreed, that each of them shall produce, shew, and weigh, at the ———— Cockpit, ———— on the ———— day of ———— next, beginning at the hour of seven o'clock in the said morning, ———— cocks, none to be less than three pounds six ounces, nor more than four pounds eight ounces; and as many of each party's cocks as come within ———— ounces of the other party's cocks, shall fight for ———— guineas a battle—that is, ———— guineas each cock, in as equal divisions as the battle can be divided into, as pits or days play, at the cockpit aforesaid; and that the party's cocks that win the greatest number of battle matches out of the number aforesaid, shall be entitled to the sum of ———— guineas as odd battle money; and the sum is to be made stakes into the hands of Mr. ———— before any cocks are pitted, in equal shares between the parties aforesaid; and the parties further agree to produce, shew, and weigh, on the said weighing day, ———— cocks, for bye-battles, subject to the same as the main cocks before-mentioned, and those to be added to the number of main cocks unmatched; and as many of them as come within one ounce of each other, shall fight for two guineas each battle, to be as equally divided as can be, and added to each pit or day's play with the main of cocks;—and it is also agreed, that the balance of the battle money shall be paid at the end of each pit or day's play; and to fight in fair reputed silver spurs, and with fair hackles, and to be subject to all the usual rules of cock-fighting as is practised in London and Newmarket;—and the profit of of the pit or day's play to be equally divided between the

said parties after all charges are paid and satisfied, that usually are thereupon. Witness our hands this ———— day of ———— 181 .

Witness J. W. W. S. J. C.

Rules for matching and fighting cocks in London.

To begin the same by fighting the lighter pair of cocks (which fall in match) first, proceeding upwards to the end: that every lighter pair may fight earlier than those that are heavier.

In matching (with relation to the battles) it is a rule always, in London, that, after the cocks of the main are weighed, the match bills are compared.

That every pair of dead or equal weight are separated, and fight against others, provided that it appears that the main can be enlarged by adding thereto either one battle or more thereby.

Further Remarks.

Breeding is involved in many difficulties, for cocks will partake of a variety of shapes; and, with some feeders, a cock, full in his girth, and narrow behind, is preferred; when, with others, a lofty spiring narrow cock is approved. As this is a well-known circumstance, and if you breed to any extent, you have to combat with all their various partialities, if those fall to your lot who are enamoured of the former description, the cocks of the latter become a loss upon your own hands, although the breeder is confident they have every fighting excellence that can attach to the cock:—and, although I have ever recommended the establishing the first class, yet there are certainly many instances where that partiality ought to be set aside. This present year (1814) a gentleman of my acquaintance, who has been long in the habit of breeding

some capital feathered Birchins, which are invariably lofty and thin; and such is the excellency of these cocks, that their average winnings have been nine out of thirteen for several years; yet he is now so circumstanced, in respect to his present connections, that not one of these birds have been an object to the present feeder. This is not brought forward as being an advocate in promoting the breed of the narrow-shaped cock, yet cocks so eminent in their blood, feather, and heel, are much preferable to those of superior shape, not so gifted. My friend is perfectly aware that his birds are deemed deficient in shape, but he still means to persevere, rather than to hazard the giving them the so much-esteemed shape required by a fresh cross, or the giving them up altogether, under the idea that he may lose in them what he esteems a superior acquisition. His unconquerable arguments are, that he had rather have them with their matchless heels, than the most esteemed symmetry without.

Feeders say they expect good shapes; but what they call good shapes do not bring with them good heels. A lofty, narrow-shaped cock is wonderfully agile in his sparring, and for the most part more dangerous in his spurs, than a contrary shape; but a broad cock, with equal share of heel, must have superior resistance and power, and, if attainable, they are, without a doubt, the most to be approved. I should think my feeder nicer than wise were he to refuse cocks of mine of that description, merely because he did not like their shapes. Sporting gentlemen, one and all, give unquestionable preference to a cock with a good spur, as the most decided acquisition appertaining to a blood cock, therefore I cannot impeach my friend's attachment to his well-tried favourite birds. His ultimatum he ever holds out to me, that he will fight a main, or any number of mains, with any gentlemen in the three kingdoms, for their sum, meeting him half-way—and such a main I am now commissioned to make. I did not mean to convey his wishes through this medium, as a season may be passed over ere this is generally out, but my more immediate reason was to imprint upon the minds of my readers, that cocks, deviating from the true standard of shape, are not whimsically to be rejected when they have so many excellencies to counterbalance. This is not a solitary circumstance, which can only be adduced in mitigation of the sometimes rejected cocks; for it is now full in my memory, that a set of cocks, the property of a Captain Barnes, a resident near Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, where I formerly

resided, fought a great many cocks of this description, save, that instead of their being equal in feather to the last recited, were perfect cuckoos,—in most other respects, as to shape, similar. These cocks were still more lofty in their sparring, and an adversary had seldom the chance of a long battle: they were quick despatchers, and deep game. These, notwithstanding their feather, which, according to our ideas and modern improvement of breeding, would be sufficient to reject them in toto, were sought for with avidity, and no cocks had warmer advocates, or more general followers. These party-coloured birds are apt to degenerate in their constitutions, but that was not the case with them during their being in possession of their original owner; for I had an opportunity of knowing them for several years. It was remarked that no cocks retained that beautiful vivid red, that lustre of health so every way conspicuous in their cocks. The vivacity of the eye, and their high-beaming spirit, ranked them a superior class of birds. The attitude, carriage, or disposition of the whole body in these cocks were remarkably graceful, and their head and neck were always in proudly motion. At the decease of Captain Barnes, these cocks fell into the hands of the neighbouring colliers, became crossed with other fowls, and lost their original character. This is another instance of the great difficulty of crossing to advantage; for we see, notwithstanding every excellence, if there is not that uniformity and corresponding character in the hens, or cock, it is more than high odds if the produce is equal to either originals. If they, like many others, had been properly kept to themselves, like the Cheshire Piles, they might and would have fought their way into admiration. Adverting to the stately vivacity of these birds, it has frequently occurred to me, in a variety of instances, what a wonderful difference there is in brothers in respect to that outward and pleasing liveliness, from those that have been at hand-fed walks, and those from well-furnished walks: the former become stationary to the spot, without action, motion, or employment: he appears oppressed and heavy, and his nourishment brings on a contracted aversion to action: nature, as it were, preys upon itself. How necessary, indeed, is action and exercise to the body, may be judged by the difference we find between those cocks who labour in plenty, and those who are in the predicament alluded to. And how much superior is the complexion and constitution which labour creates, in comparison with that habit of body we see consequent to an indulgent state of indigence and rest. Several of my

cocks that are hand-fed, which are at proper distances from contiguous annoyance, are never fed by those who walk them, but inviolably have their corn given them twice a day at a distance from the house, spread upon chaff; at other times upon short straw, that they may labour to obtain it. By this method they are generally upon the alert, are seldom or never near the house, and are no way inferior to the others.

This present season I have adopted a mode of breeding which should be strongly recommended to those who have proper conveniences. They are equi-distant, not more than three to four hundred yards, some two or three inclosures, intersecting each place: two of these are fixed under a high covert hedge in the form of a dog-kennel, and are well secured; the hen has a small apartment divided from the part they roost in, to lay and hatch. At each of these places I have only one hen or pullet with a cock: these are selected from sisters whose shapes, feather, &c. pre-eminently distinguish them from the rest. Each of these situations is only a small distance from running springs: they have well-sheltered edges, and a fine dry carpet. It is not the situation only which contributes to this promising mode, but a chance of deriving a greater probability of success, by having no other hen to interfere—they are the choice of your whole stud; and if any failure should follow, there will be no difficulty in ascertaining from which it originates, as a fair trial of the cock would determine: for, if satisfied with him, it must rest with the hen. When several sisters are breeding from, the greater difficulty you have in finding from which the failure proceeds—but from this mode you have a short reference. At a sufficient early period the produce was about one hundred chickens. This trial consists of two stags which are brothers, with each a two-year old hen, which are sisters—they have not a deviating character, consistent with the most approved choice for crossing; the other two cocks are two years old, and also brothers to the stags, with each a pullet, sisters to the two-year old hens, which were with the stags. By this arrangement you are breeding a great number of brothers in blood; and I never yet saw a produce so regular in feather, and every appertaining quality, as they are from this systematic mode of selection; and I have a pleasure of anticipating a fortunate result. A greater number may be produced than from such an allotted few, if you have the command of a sufficient number of blood

hens—to sit in due season, which may be done by taking the eggs, as they are laid, and the nest egg when inclined to sit.

It may be said, that from four sisters and one cock may be had as many birds as devoting four cocks and stags to four hens and pullets. Admitted—but you have the advantage of four cocks to one in the mode recommended; for, notwithstanding every due attention is had to select a single cock, free from every apparent fault, yet we have frequently found ourselves disappointed either from a change in constitution, or some other cause. On the other hand, you have the best calculated chance to succeed. I have before observed, under the head of breeding, that sisters may so essentially differ in health, &c. and the difficulty of attending the prevention of laying to each other is scarcely to be accomplished; of course you cannot distinguish each from the other, and if any defect takes place, you are totally at a loss from which of the sisters it originated. It has many other claims to preference, which the cock and hen must be benefited by this pairing, and the reference in case of failure much easier detected, that I flatter myself that whoever makes the trial will find the advantages so materially in favour of this mode, that he will in future adopt it with facility.

It has been a matter of astonishment to me since I have resided in Nottinghamshire, that so few good cocks are to be met with. Amongst a number of breeders to whom I have a friendly access, few are sufficiently cautious in the crosses, so essentially necessary to produce a regular set of good cocks but there is a prevailing partiality amongst cockers which is not easily to be done away, and probably must be the work of time. We are frequently disappointed in our best endeavours, and even at a time when our hopes and expectations have run high, grounded upon the idea that our selection comprised every rare qualification to warrant success;—for I may yet venture to add, without partiality, that if they possessed every essential character that could possibly constitute a proper cross, still some heterogeneous mixture might lurk inherent, to disappoint all the practical attention and wary caution, to render the cross complete, and to establish a regular set of cocks. Is it, then, to be wondered at, the failure of those who breed without any of these nice regards, either to similarity of feather, &c. and those congenial attributes to form a complete whole?

Still I flatter myself, that the professed amateurs of this noble bird are more alive to the improvement, from the well-known superiority of cocks bred by those eminently distinguished for their abilities in every sporting department; the leading pre-eminent character they have supported must awaken the efforts of those who would profit from such enlightened precedents. Those of Lord Derby are the strongest recent proofs of my assertions: their successful prowess marks that nice discriminating care ever attendant upon whatever his Lordship pursues in the sporting line. His cocks are more regular and undeviating than most cocks within my knowledge, a certain criterion of that well-regulated system his Lordship has long and successfully pursued; and I will hazard an opinion, that, were breeders to adhere to the mode recommended, few occurrences out of the ordinary course of breeding would be less rare, and would tend to establish a race of cocks infinitely superior to the present. It is astonishing to see how wedded some amateurs are, so every way dissonant to the true principles of breeding—and my endeavours to remove such obsolete practice has ever been an Herculean task. It avails not your setting forth the impropriety of crossing contrary feathers, &c.—they are satisfied with the idea that they were both undeniable of the sort. If they are not equal to the originals, they are totally at a loss how to account for their deviation, reconciling themselves by advancing some pretext totally incompatible with the true cause—and they will even venture upon the same fowls another year. Still involved in error, they seek out for such as in their estimation will bid defiance to any possible disappointment—breed on without regard to what constitutes any congruent principle, and they become tired by their own infatuation. There are others who have enjoyed a more extensive opportunity, by mixing with their superiors, through feeders introducing their cocks approved by them; thus benefitted by repeated intercourse, have bred with considerable success. Sant, well known to the gentlemen of the sod, who resided in Derbyshire, was in the habit of breeding as good cocks as most men in the kingdom; he adhered closely to every requisite for judicious crossing, and keeping them properly together, and for many years no man fought with greater success; and I know of no cocks that were more generally sought after—a convincing proof of his attention. He had the advantage, too, of residing amongst a numerous set of men who have long been in the habit of breeding; and in the interval of his rapid success no country was in

such general esteem, and any number could be procured He was a ruling satellite over those hardy set of colliers who are invariably cockers wherever they reside; they are unwearied in their endeavours to procure such as are first in estimation; and whatever he judged superior, they were always at his command—and Sant reciprocally assisted them from his more numerous produce. He was deservingly high in Beastall's favour; who, during Sant's celebrity, was generally esteemed in his profession. Beastall had great privileges from his employers, and whatever cocks he thought would promote or add improvement to those of Sant, he was never sparing, and they were duly appreciated by him. Under these singular advantages we need not wonder that Sant should, for so many years, enjoy the well-earned encomiums of the amateurs of the sod. Beastall bought and fed many of his cocks, and of course several fought in the mains in which I was engaged. They were a very dark black-red, striped, uncommonly black upon the heck, black beak, black legs, very lofty, and fought high weights; they were favourites with Beastall, and in his hands became favourites with the public.

The high estimation these cocks were held in, caused such repeated applications to breed from, that Sant found no difficulty in obtaining sometimes very exhorbitant considerations for those he chose to part with: but the difficulty of getting any hens from him, from which you could derive the most essential advantages, were next to a prohibition amongst the parties concerned in these birds. However, I bred from several of the cocks, and the first of my trials was with some very favourite hens from Leicester, bred by a Mr. Needham there, but they proved only second rates; the hens were as well descended as the cocks, but the produce varied as much from the originals as possible. They were the choice of Beastall, who was well and long acquainted with both sorts—and such was their strong affinity, and selected by a man so every way qualified to judge of their proper essential characters, to mingle those similarities, so as to form and stamp their like—that I had high expectations from every cross I made. But such, I repeat, is the difficulty of crossing to advantage, that an amateur should be possessed of some persevering degree of patience to sustain the frequent disappointments which extensive practice will ever make him heir to. All feeders are not breeders: and one ability is perhaps coequal with the other, where all do not excel.

Cocking, like all other sporting pursuits, has its ups and downs, with all their attendant disappointments—and whatever is most predominant in our pursuits, is more or less followed with avidity and with various success. I am aware, too, that no scope of practice, however great, will make some professors go beyond the line of mediocrity. The advantages sometimes derived from those callings must arise with those who were initiated with men of known abilities, and if fortunately aided by other requisites, they are frequently known to tread close upon the heel of their employers. The public voice is loud in praise of Harry, who was long Thompson's assistant, and who attaches credit to his master's well-known abilities—his industry, and general good conduct, with his recent successes, cannot fail to recommend him to the notice of the amateur, and to bring him forward with some degree of eclat. Thompson's abilities as a feeder and a setter ranked him one of the first of his country; and as far as my judgment could decide, few men exhibited a cock upon the pit in higher style. Whether he fought a cock of high or low weights, they were conspicuously alive to that degree of perfection Thompson was capable of giving. His mode of reducing great weights was singularly effective; equally fortunate was he in lifting them up to their proper standard with every vigour and fire. It is much to be regretted, that men of rare abilities in their profession should have some reigning foible to throw a cloud over their otherwise meritorious actions. If Harry is in possession of the mode above alluded to, all the other routine of practice could not escape him. I have been well informed that Thompson enjoyed this secret for several years, without its being known to any other feeder; and as Harry was a valuable assistant, let us hope that he is not quite without it.

Matching

In general is made from sudden impulses, and frequently entered upon in that degree of hurry which seldom ends with the success a deliberate provision would probably insure—such as your being well cocked, and stags in succession, if for a term of years, a competent feeder—the distance you have

to meet your adversary; and as feeders are generally mentioned previous to the articles being made, weigh the public opinion between the merits of the two, and what probable odds there is against you as to your adversary's cocks. If you are to fight upon his ground, and your distance is considerable, you will not meet upon equal terms. The aggregate of these duly considered will guard you against contested odds. Suppose your cocks and your feeders upon equal reputed merit, your distance coequal—I see no impediment to closing. Cocks that are to be conveyed to any considerable distance by a carriage, be its construction what it will, and every security made use of for their ease, &c. they still will suffer more or less fatigue; and although the action and reaction of the carriage may in our ideas be trifling, yet the effect is irksome, and the sensation in that kind of pendant motion unpleasant and jading, bordering upon sickness, and a cock does not easily regain his wonted liveliness; but when you meet on equal terms, the one is under the same liability as the other.

My sole aim in this, is to guard my readers against entering upon a match too precipitately, that you may avoid meeting your adversary with the odds against you; for, however partial we may be to our own cocks, theirs may be equal, if not superior, and where any advantages take place in the match, you may anticipate a suffering in proportion to any neglect in the arrangement. In respect to time, they are calculated from various motives most conducive to a good meeting: and take the cocks as they are at the time, these probably include three-fourths of the mains that are fought—they are established to answer the sundry purposes of races at different periods of the year, and help to fill up the vacancies of the respective days. But mains fought for a certain number of years, without regard to any meeting (except the second Newmarket Spring Meeting) which is much earlier than any main ought to be fought (for cocks are at least two months later in completing their feather than they were thirty years ago) and as such, the first week in June is as early as any independent main ought to be fought. We cannot expect that cocks will fight equally well at all seasons and in all circumstances—practice convinces us to the contrary. When nature has perfected her works, and cocks have reached the summit of renovation, a cautious matcher is then giving his feeder every advantage he can wish for to exert his abilities for his interest, and he ought not to contend with

difficulties which by a judicious foresight, might have been prevented.

The Nottingham Journal is just now at hand, exhibiting three days' fight at Manchester, and the result of this meeting has a strong tendency to confirm what I have advanced. The three days fight is as follows:

Heap	m.	B.	Harrison	m.	B.
Tuesday	8	2	Tuesday	3	3
Wednesday	5	1	Wednesday	1	1
Thursday	5	1	Thursday	1	1
	18	4		5	5

It appears by this statement that Heap won 22 out of 32; such a leading majority seems to include some great desiderata, which, from not being present, I cannot elucidate; but if aught can palliate such an unequal contest, it probably may be found in some one or more of the causes here set forth. The two last days certainly were fought uniformly, by winning one and one each day. If Harrison's cocks laboured under no serious injury from their tedious conveyance, whence comes it that a man, whose practice has been considerable, and whose employers, I dare say, are indefatigable, and who are esteemed happy in their choice of cocks, should have suffered such a majority in the three days' fight? It is to me very incomprehensive: these deviations fall to the lot of many practical professors, and perhaps there may be an attendant fate or destiny which Dame Fortune chooses to prescribe, and clog the wheels of men's well-doing. She is a fickle Dame, and is wont now and then to display her vagaries and whims. Who knows but Mr. H. in his next encounter, may be endued with all her gifted dispensations of excelling? Or perhaps she has her limitations, and when professors have run a long course of good and bad—thus far shall ye go, and no farther. Let the young and the active enter the list. Feeders in general have, or exercise, a power to take and refuse such cocks as their employers may think proper to send them; they have their favourite attachments, for one feeder will take in cocks essentially different from another, and you will find some difficulty in accommodating their partialities. It is not every gentleman who makes a match, that is competent to every required qualification to

choose a pen of cocks, and he implicitly relies on his feeder; but few embark without experience, and when the particulars are once known, there can be no great difficulty in deciding at once upon such cocks as are adequate to the meeting, and to fulfil the engagement. At any rate, no gentleman can hesitate to take an interesting part, at least jointly with his feeder, and to possess a decided toto, whenever he chooses to pass it. A proper attention to this very circumstance, warrants me to say, it had its agreeable results.

Remarks

On the annexed pages, columned and prefaced, for the purpose of keeping a regular Account of every Department, with a printed Alphabet.

Page 63 to 67 * is to enter every year the brood cocks or stags you have selected for breeding, as well as your hens or pullets, and you will observe to put in the page such cocks, &c. as are taken from, as well as the number they stand in, in their original entry; and as the whole of your stud is at hand previous to your purchasing this book, I have provided several pages under the head of Common Place Memorandums, and of course whatever page they are inserted in will be added to your first year's breeding; and so long as you make use of the same—on the following years you will refer to the page in which they are entered. I have also filled up a form for the guidance of my readers, so that they may be more readily acquainted with the plan laid down for their convenience.

From page 68 to 72 inclusive,*
Names and Characters of all my Cocks,

(No. 1 to 5, or as many sorts as you have, with their marks.)

* *See footnote, page* 61.

From page 73 to 107 inclusive,*
The Persons' Names who walk your cocks, by way of Dr. and Cr.

Page 108 to 114 inclusive,*
Bags in Stock.

Page 115 to 124 inclusive,*
Common-place Memorandums.

Page 125 to 145 inclusive,*
Cash Account.
This account may include all expences, all winnings, &c.—balancing every year.

* NOTE TO PRESENT EDITION.—*In order to save space only specimen pages of each of Mr. Sketchley's forms of account books have been given. The pages noted above refer to the original* 1814 *edition.*

Pedigree of Brood Cocks, Hens, or Pullets.

Pedigree of Brood Cocks, Hens, or Pullets, 1815.

Dec. 5 — Turned down at the cottage Black-red Spitfire, page No. 1, No. 1, Cock with four sisters of the cross marks No. —.

	Hens set.	Eggs.	Produce.	To Hatch.
Mar. 20	Sister	15	13	April 10th.
—— 24	Do.	13	11	—— 14th.
April 7	Do.	15	14	—— 28th.
—— 14	Do.	11	9	May 4th.
	4	54	47	

Jan. 3 — Turned down at Spring Dale Birchin Duck, page No. 1, No. 2, Cock with three sisters, Shropshire Lasses, No. —.

	Hens set.	Eggs.	Produce.	To Hatch.
Mar. 20	Sister	11	10	April 10th.
—— 27	Do.	15	13	—— 17th.
April 1	Do.	13	11	—— 22d.
	3	39	34	

Names and Characters of all my Cocks.

NAMES AND CHARACTERS OF ALL MY COCKS.

No. 1. Spitfires marked.
2. Shropshires do.
3. Bir. Ducks do.
4. Spots do.
5. Piles do.

Account of Cocks, by way of Dr. and Cr.

Dr. CAREFUL, Mr. Repton,

1814.			No.	Paid	Wk.
April	12	To bl. red br. norril, stag.....	1	—	13
1815.					
May	21	To Birchin duck ot rt. stag	2	—	13
June	10	To br. red, in left, stag.....	3	—	3
	22	To Ginger all fours, stag	4	—	3

Dr. COCKER, Mr. Southwell,

1814.			Paid	Wlk

CONTRA, Cr.

1815			No.	Won.	Lost.
June	6	By black-red to Manchester.....	1		
Aug.	12	By Birchin to Nottingham	21	—	⋈
——	19	By br.-red to Derby.....	3	⋈	
——	23	By Ginger to Litchfield.....	4	—	⋈

CONTRA, Cr.

Won.	Lost.

Bags in Stock.

BAGS IN STOCK.

1814.		Bags marked S. S. No. 1 to 70.				
		Sent.			*Returned.*	
May	17	To Nottingham	7	May	14th	
June	11	To Leicester	9	June	16th	
——	20	To Manchester	12	——	27th	
——	22	To Loughborough ...	9	July	4th	1 kept.
——	26	To London	11	——	8th	2 do.
——	29	To Stamford	22	——	17th	3 do.
			70			6 kept.

Common-Place Memorandums.

COMMON-PLACE MEMORANDUMS.

Brought up from my last Brood Book

Cocks.

Hens.

Pullets.

Cash Account.

CASH, Dr.

1815.			£.	s.	d.
		To cash from last balance	372	9	8
June	1	Neated from Manchester	50	1	2
	26	To received for 12 pairs to London.....	18	0	0
July	6	Neated from Stamford	20	0	0

CASH, Cr.

1815.			£.	s.	d.
		By paid for walks 1814	15	0	0
June	2	By three brood places	9	2	0
		By my feeder two years	60	0	0
	22	By new bags	2	0	0
	27	By pens new for hospital cocks	4	0	0

Alphabetical List.

ALPHABETICAL LIST.

A	C
B	D

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